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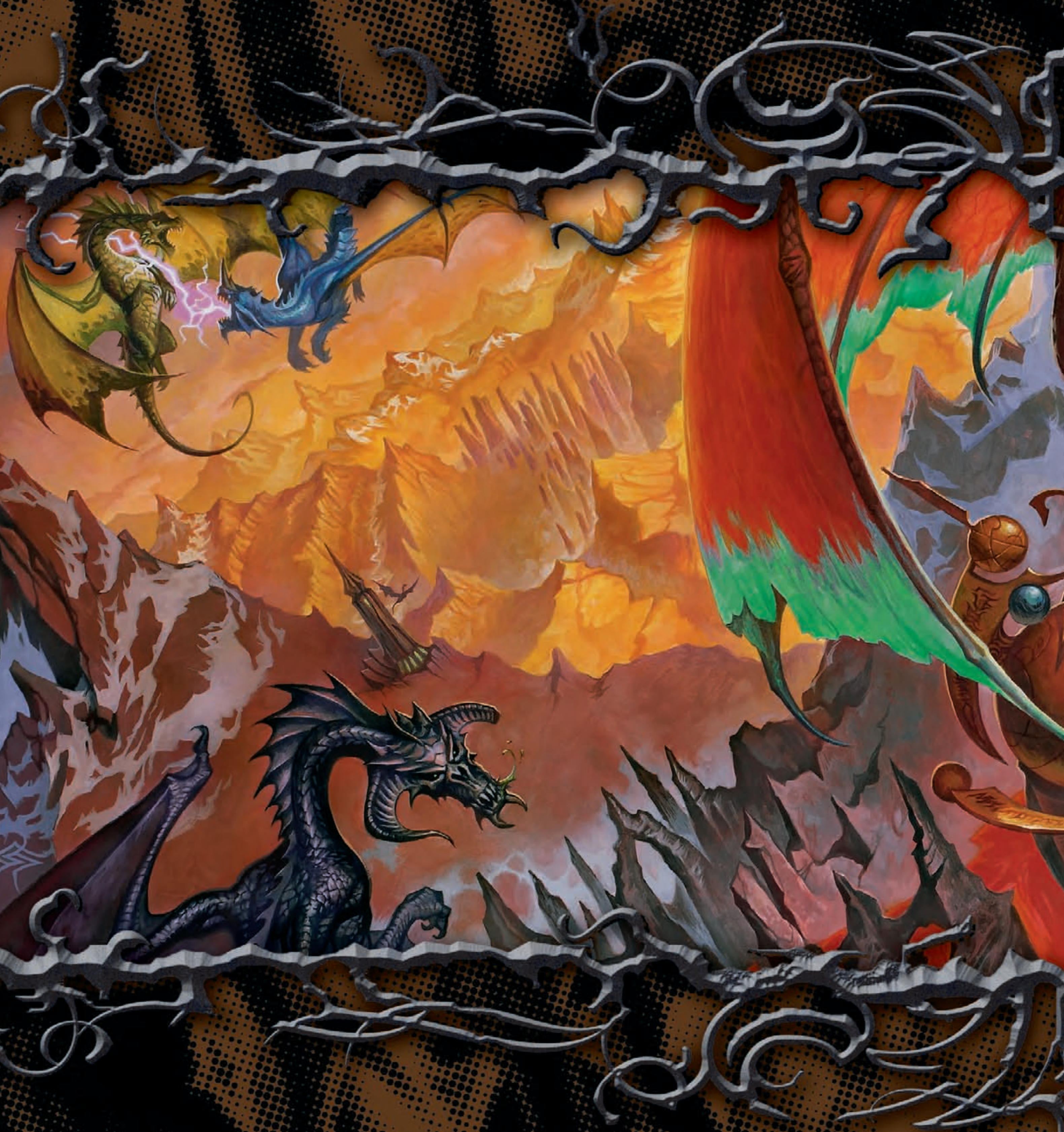

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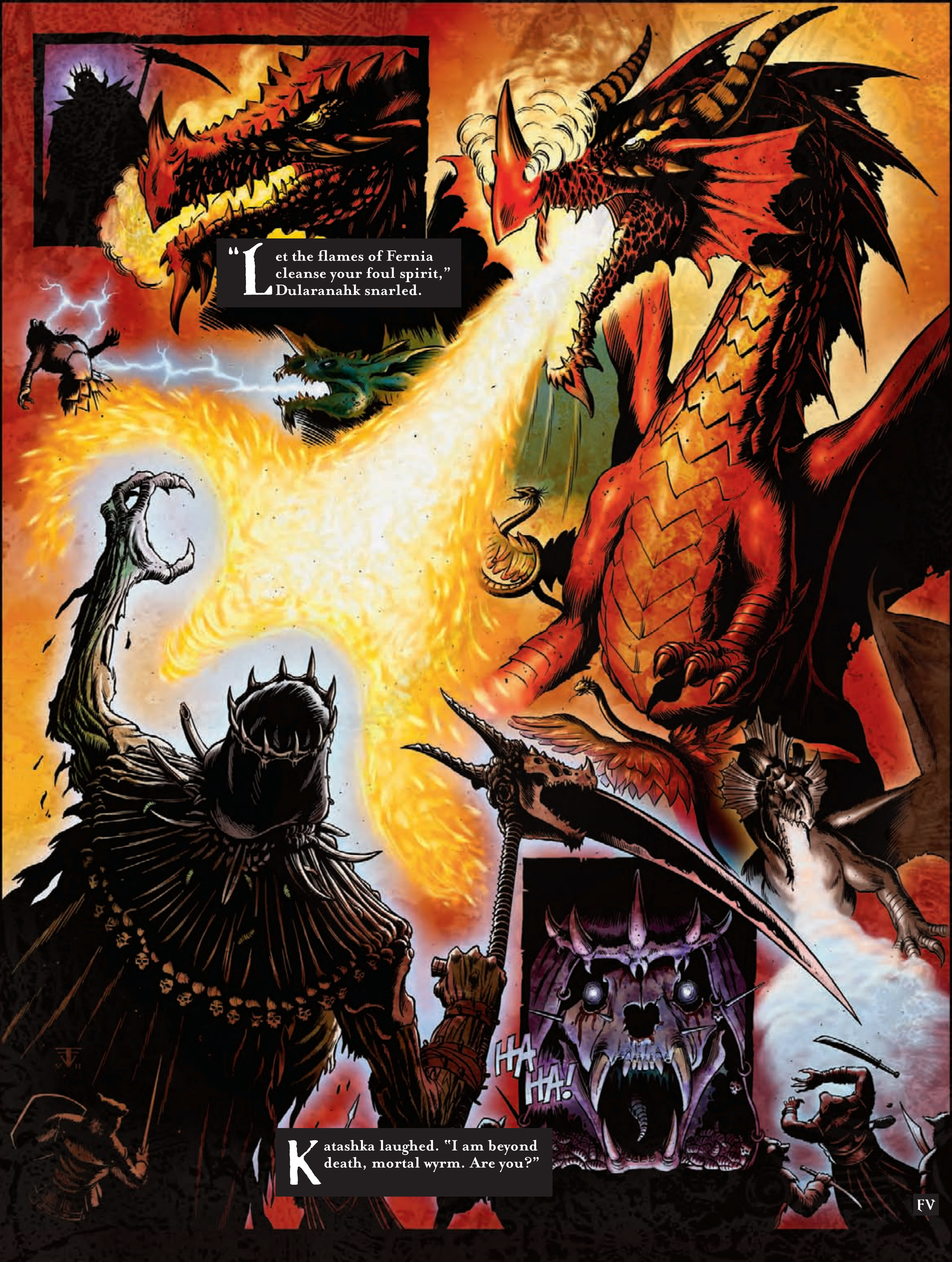
"Let the flames of Fernia cleanse your foul spirit," Dularanahk snarled.
HA HA!
Katashka laughed. "I am beyond death, mortal wyrm. Are you?"

INTRODUCTION

In Adar, a group of Riedran soldiers are forced back by hurricane winds and a terrible storm. A shadow is seen moving in the clouds, and the soldiers curse the Storm Guardians, the dragons who defend the realm of refuge . . .

In Xen'drik, a silver dragon plays a gruesome game of chess with a frost giant chieftain. The pieces are the frozen corpses of her recent victims, reanimated and forced to serve her in death . . .

In Khorvaire, an influential minister holds a secret meeting with a cunning crime lord. This negotiation irrevocably alters the balance of power in the great city of Fairhaven. One of these men is human; the other, a dragon who has made its home in Aundair since before the rise of Galifar. But which one is man, and which wyrm?

And in the heart of Argonnessen, thirty-six dragons gather in a vast stone spire older than the human race. The collective power of this conclave could shatter a kingdom. A debate rages on a matter of interpretation—the outcome could determine the future of Eberron.

Dragons have walked this world since the dawn of time. They are creatures of legend, subjects of a thousand tales, slayers of demons, and destroyers of kingdoms. They are prophets and puppet masters, and despite their awesome reputation, few humans truly realize the power these wyrms wield. In the modern age, very few people have met a dragon and lived to tell the tale. But an age of adventure has arrived, a time when new heroes rise up to challenge the legends of the past. And so it is time to learn about the great wyrms that have shaped the world since the first age.

Welcome to *Dragons of Eberron*.

USING THIS BOOK

The dragons of Eberron are far more than monsters. They are masterminds and manipulators, guardians and prophets. They have slain heroes and brought ruin to entire civilizations. They have also protected the lesser races and preserved life in a myriad of forms. *Dragons of Eberron* examines the dragons' place in the world and the many ways that they can be used in a campaign. This book includes information on organizations with an interest in draconic activities, including the Twelve, the Lords of Dust, and a number of new and deadly cabals. Beyond this, encounters, adventure hooks, feats, spells, and treasures can be found throughout the book. Finally, a number of fully detailed dragons appear, providing unique challenges and rewards for adventurers who dare to match wits with the wyrms of Eberron.

This **Introduction** provides an overview of the dragons of Eberron, including their role in history and common traditions.

Chapter One: Dragons of Argonnessen explores the ancestral homeland of the dragons. From culture and geography to adventure sites, this chapter provides a great deal for those who wish to explore the dark continent.

Chapter Two: Dragons of Khorvaire examines those dragons that live among humanity. The lords of the Chamber shape the course of nations in accordance with the draconic Prophecy, while rogue dragons pursue their own hidden agendas.

Chapter Three: Dragons of Sarlona delves into the land hidden from the Prophecy. Ancient guardians, rebels, wyrms driven mad by forbidden knowledge; these are just a few of the dragons of Sarlona.

Chapter Four: Dragons of Xen'drik examines the rogues and exiles that make their home in Xen'drik, living amid the ruins of the fallen kingdom.

WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY

Dragons of Eberron makes use of the information in the three DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® core rulebooks—*Player's Handbook (PH), Dungeon Master's Guide (DMG),* and *Monster Manual (MM),* as well as the *EBERRON™ Campaign Setting (ECS).*

As befits a book addressing all matters draconic, *Dragons of Eberron* frequently references *Draconomicon (Dr).* In addition, throughout this book other abbreviations (sometimes in superscript form) are often used to denote game elements and other materials that appear in certain supplements. Those supplements and their abbreviations (when applicable) are as follows: *Complete Adventurer (CAd), Complete Arcane (CAr), Complete Psionic (CP),*

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Complete Warrior (*CW*), *Dragon Magic*, *Dungeon Master's Guide II* (*DMG2*), *Expanded Psionics Handbook* (*EPH*), *Explorer's Handbook* (*EH*), *Fiend Folio* (*FF*), *Fiendish Codex I* (*FC1*), *Fiendish Codex II* (*FC2*), *Heroes of Battle* (*HB*), *Libris Mortis* (*LM*), *Magic of Eberron* (*MoE*), *Miniatures Handbook*, *Monster Manual II* (*MM2*), *Monster Manual III* (*MM3*), *Monster Manual IV* (*MM4*), *Player's Handbook II*, *Races of the Dragon*, *Races of Eberron* (*RE*), *Secrets of Sarlona* (*SoS*), *Secrets of Xen'drik* (*SX*), *Sharn: City of Towers* (*Sh*), *Spell Compendium* (*SC*), and *Tome of Battle* (*ToB*). Although possession of these supplements can enhance your enjoyment of *Dragons of Eberron,* they are not strictly necessary. In most cases, all the details you need to make use of a particular creature or rule from another source are provided in this book.

References

In general, rules, spells, feats, abilities, and other game mechanics that appear in one of the three core books are not cited in *Dragons of Eberron.* Those pulled from other supplements sometimes provide a title and page citation. In statistics blocks or other notations with limited space, footnotes are used. If a footnoted term is described elsewhere in this book, an asterisk (*) appears. Other footnotes use the book's title abbreviation (for example, *ECS* means *Eberron*™ *Campaign Setting*).

A History of Dragons

The history of dragons stretches back to the dawn of time. Each flight has its own heroes, triumphs, and defeats, and over the course of tens of thousands of years much truth has been lost or consumed by legend. This section addresses events Khorvairian historians have studied, no doubt but a few glittering coins in the vast hoard of draconic history.

The Progenitor Wyrms

The wisest dragons contend that the world was born in battle. According to myth, the emptiness before creation was the domain of three mighty dragons. Golden Siberys was the source of all magic. Gentle Eberron was the fountain of life. Cruel Khyber was the master of secret knowledge, and of the powers that lurk in the darkness. Together, they held dominion over the fate of all, and they pondered the proper shape of the universe.

In the beginning, the Progenitors worked together. They started with the thirteen planes, but as they molded reality, rifts began to form between them. Dark Khyber grew greedy, and noble Siberys responded by becoming more forceful; each sought greater influence in the work. Daanvi, Fernia, and Irian bear the prevailing mark of Siberys. Kythri, Mabar, and Xoriat show the dominant touch of Khyber. Eberron sought to mediate but could not bridge the divide.

When it came time to create the final, central plane, the tensions between Siberys and Khyber could not be contained. The dark one tore into her sibling, mortally wounding the gold dragon and scattering his scales across the sky. Although not powerful enough to defeat her, Eberron knew that Khyber could not be allowed to benefit from her deeds. The gentle one refused to fight Khyber with claw and tooth. Instead, Eberron embraced her, trapping Khyber within her smothering coils. Eberron called on the powers of life, giving birth to soil, tree, and ocean, and so transformed herself into a living prison that Khyber could never escape.

Thus Eberron became the world on which all life grew. To this day, she nurtures and sustains all. Siberys's remains became the ring around the world; his scattered scales became the stars. Khyber remains trapped within—the Dragon Below, the Mother of Monsters, the source of all darkness—forever struggling to escape and bring an end to it all.

The First Age

In the wake of the battle of the Progenitors, life emerged on the new world. Siberys had fallen in battle, but power remained within his blood. Filled with the purest essence of magic, that blood fell on Eberron, merging life and magic to produce new creatures with the strength of both Progenitors: dragons. Where the blood of Siberys struck the clouds, silver dragons were born. It fell on the cold peaks, and white dragons rose from the ice. It struck the swamps, and black dragons emerged from the dark depths. And so all the dragons were born, mighty and proud, possessing the mystical power of Siberys and the vibrant life force of Eberron.

Few of the creatures of the modern age existed at the dawn of time. The titans of Xen'drik were in their infancy, possessed of power but lacking knowledge. The lesser races had not been born; the dark creatures had not been spawned. So it was that wild flights of dragons soared above the world, reveling in their might.

The dragons' only true match were the couatls, the feathered serpents of Sarlona. For all their power, dragons are mortal creatures. They reproduce, they grow old, and in time they die. The couatls stood outside the cycle of life; legends say that the couatls were formed from the pure blood of Siberys before it struck Eberron, and that, as a result, they were truly immortal. They were reborn only after death, so that their numbers remained constant. Though powerful, the couatls kept to Sarlona, leaving the dragons to explore the world.

THE BLOOD OF KHYBER

For untold millennia, the dragons were the sole lords of Eberron. Then a new threat emerged. Khyber was bound in the depths of Eberron, but this did not eliminate the dark dragon's power. In time, a host of horrors spawned in the depths. Rakshasas, aboleths, and other terrors emerged to lay claim to the world above. The greatest were the Overlords, fiends with such power that they could almost be called gods. At that time, the dragons were organized into simple flights, which fought with one another as often as not. Scattered and wild, they were no match for the Overlords of Khyber.

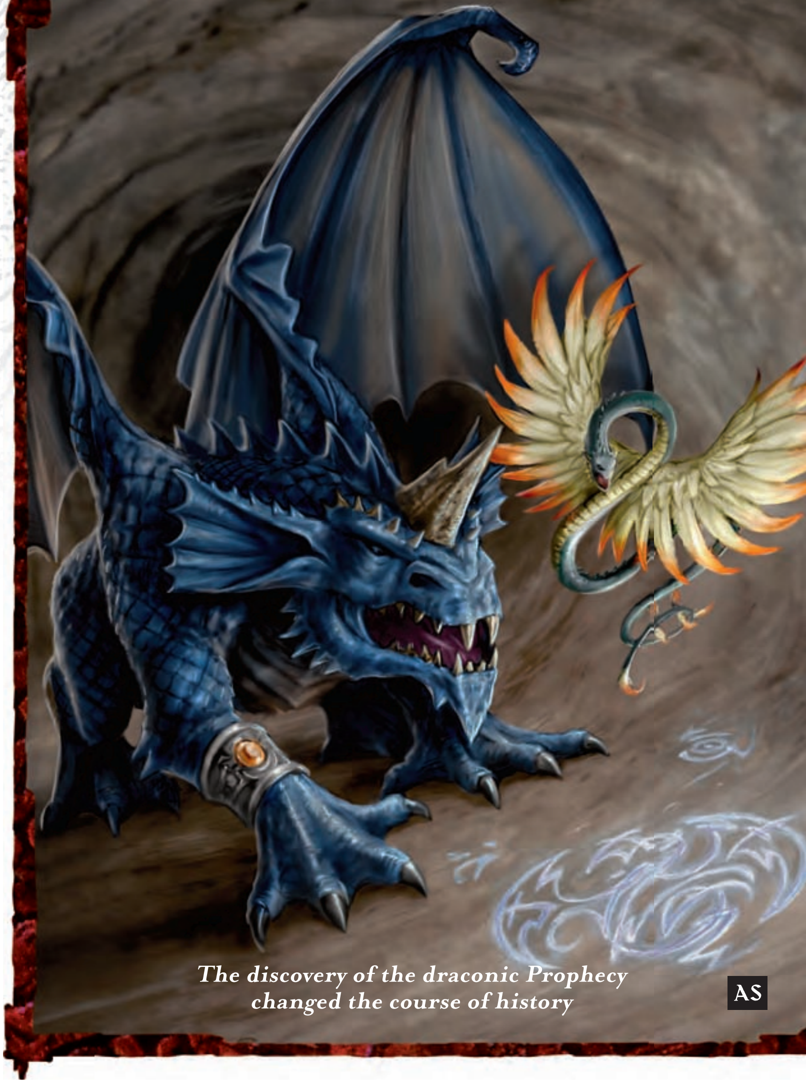
THE DRACONIC PROPHECY

After the mighty fiends consolidated their hold on the surface world, they ruled over a nightmare kingdom for hundreds of thousands of years. The once-proud dragons were forced into slavery and servitude. The fiendish dominion might have continued until the end of time, if not for the couatl Hezcalipa and a blue dragon named Ourelonastrix. Working together over the course of centuries, these two visionaries studied the sky and stars, and compared their findings with mysterious patterns that appeared on the earth. They became convinced that such study could reveal a map of the future, an outline of the myriad paths history might follow. Ourelonastrix believed it to be the wisdom of the Progenitors, the very blueprint of reality. He called it the draconic Prophecy, authored by Eberron and Siberys themselves.

THE GREAT WAR

The draconic Prophecy gave Ourelonastrix insights into the weaknesses of the demonic Overlords. Even more, it gave the dragon and his kin a sense of hope, the belief that dragons were part of something greater. Following the path of prophecy, Ourelonastrix and Hezcalipa rallied their peoples against the children of Khyber, setting in motion a war that would continue for thousands of years. Despite their raw power—or perhaps, because of it—the Overlords were scattered and overconfident. This allowed the combined might of the dragon–couatl alliance to defeat them one by one.

Despite this advantage, the war seemed hopeless. The Overlords were truly immortal. The defeat of an Overlord was temporary at best, and no simple spell could bind them. Then Hezcalipa's studies uncovered a path to victory. Indeed, the outcome appeared ordained. Still, the cost was terrible. Led by Hezcalipa, the couatls sacrificed almost their entire race, forging their immortal essence into a pure force that could hold


The discovery of the draconic Prophecy changed the course of history

Tiamat, the Daughter of Khyber

In Eberron, deities do not walk the earth. This is true even of the Dragon Gods. The dragons point to Bahamut's image in the sky, but the platinum dragon has never set foot on Eberron, and his existence is a matter of faith, not fact.

Although misconceptions abound, Tiamat's existence on Eberron is no exception for she is not truly a god. Rather, she is one of the mightiest fiends of the Age of Demons, a true daughter of the Dragon Below. Each of the Overlords has its own mystical dominion; for Tiamat, that province is dragons. Khyber and Siberys were siblings, and the taint of Khyber lies hidden in every dragon. Tiamat has the power to draw that out, corrupting and commanding the children of Eberron and Siberys. The chromatic dragons are especially vulnerable to her wiles, but even metallic dragons are at risk.

During the Age of Demons, Tiamat was the most feared of the Overlords, as she turned an army of dragons and her own twisted spawn against their kin. She was finally defeated by the couatls and bound in Argonnessen's Pit of Five Sorrows. Her corrupted spawn were utterly destroyed. Still, so great was the fear she engendered that the dragons placed her among the pantheon of dragon deities and traced her symbol in the stars. Perhaps they hoped that if Tiamat found a place in the heavens, she might never return to Eberron.

Tiamat remains bound to this day, but her power is still felt in the world. She has followers among the Lords of Dust, and she is served by an alliance of dragons and other creatures—the Talons of Tiamat. These cultists work to free the Daughter of Khyber, and they have already succeeded at the first stage of their plans, arranging for the reemergence of Tiamat's dreadful spawn. The Prophecy warns of the terrible consequences of Tiamat's return; now her cult works to fulfill the conditions of the Prophecy, even as the draconic Light of Siberys fights to keep this apocalypse at bay.

Even though Tiamat isn't a true goddess, clerics who worship the Daughter of Khyber do receive spells, just as warforged devoted to the Lord of Blades do. Tiamat herself does not grant this power, but faith and devotion to her dark ideals empowers the dedicated cleric.

Like all the Overlords of the Age of Demons, Tiamat is bound in her prison and can influence the world only through her agents. In her true form, she has power sufficient to threaten entire nations, and the ability to corrupt and control dragons. It is possible that her followers will find a way to grant their dark lady the ability to manifest, at least partially, in the world. This cataclysmic event would allow epic-level PCs to combat directly an aspect of mighty Tiamat.

the Overlords and their dire followers. A few demons escaped, but the war was won.

Although the dragons fought fiercely, some believe they abandoned the couatls at the end, refusing to share the cost of the final sacrifice. It's possible that this was a matter of fear, although that seems unlikely. It might be that, being mortal, the dragons simply didn't have the spiritual energy required. Perhaps the dragons survival was a calculated decision. The sacrifice of the couatls removed both celestials and fiends from Eberron, leaving the dragons as masters of the Prophecy and the most powerful beings in the world.

EXPANSION AND WITHDRAWAL

The Great War against the demons united the dragons. It forced them to set aside their petty rivalries and to master the mystical powers that had long lain dormant in them. The surviving dragons were more powerful than ever before, but their population had been devastated by battle. Following the defeat of the Overlords, most of the surviving dragons retreated to the sanctuary of Argonnessen. The elders gathered in the first great Conclave and laid the foundation of draconic culture that remains in place to this day. The survivors spent tens of thousands of years nursing their wounds, rebuilding their flights, identifying and studying the signs of the Prophecy, and honing the magical gifts they had developed during the war. In time, some began to look beyond Argonnessen, and to explore the lands they rediscovered.

Sixty thousand years ago, the dragons began spreading across Eberron again. They found dozens of growing civilizations—kingdoms of giants and titans in Xen'drik, primitive clans of dwarves in Frostfell, nomadic groups of shifters in Sarlona, and nascent goblins in Khorvaire. Some merely wished to study the lesser creatures. A few came as mentors, foremost among them the descendants of Ourelonastrix. These dragons shared the secrets of magic with giants, curious to see what innovations these promising creatures might develop. But the bulk of the dragons chose the path of conquest. Flights of dragons carved out dominions across the world.

For most of the dragons, it began as a game—one with a high cost in life among nondragons. In time, however, the struggle turned dragon against dragon. Friendly rivalries became bitter. The blood of dragons flowed. And as the troubles spread, the Daughter of Khyber stirred in the Pit of Five Sorrows. Hundreds of dragons fell under her sway, and the spawn of Tiamat rose from tainted broods. Given time to spread, this corruption could have destroyed Argonnessen. Fortunately for the dragons, the watchful Eyes of Chronepsis were able to identify the tainted dragons, and the militant Light of Siberys brought an end to the corruption.

The Conclave gathered at a massive natural aerie in the heart of Argonnessen. There the students of the draconic Prophecy presented their findings. To this day, the records of this gathering remain privileged information even within Argonnessen, shared only with respected and powerful elders. Most dragons believe that the seers linked Tiamat's rising power to the spread of draconic activity across the globe—opining that the influence of the dragon lords in turn empowered the Daughter of Khyber. One fact is known: Following the council, the Conclave called on the scattered dragons to return to Argonnessen. The age of draconic expansion was at an end.

THE DEVASTATION OF XEN'DRIK

Explorers in Xen'drik, Q'barra, or Adar might stumble across a weathered statue or faded image scratched into a cavern wall, but the dragons left few traces of their dominion . . . with one exception. The giants of Xen'drik were the most advanced nondragons of the age, and they had learned much in their interactions with the dragons. Those who worked with Ourelonastrix's students used draconic magic to carve out empires and dominate their continent. The arcane arts spread, and soon the giants began to explore new approaches to magic. As powerful as they are, the dragons are mired in tradition, and certain paths they refuse to tread. The giants of long-dead empires, such as the Cul'sir Empire and the Group of Eleven, had no such qualms—their exploration of blood magic and other dark arts diverged wildly from the codified teachings of Ourelonastrix.

Nonetheless, the dragons remained uninvolved. The elders of many flights studied the draconic Prophecy, but agreed that it was best not to manipulate its outcome. They simply traced its myriad paths and watched as fate chose its course.

Then the quori came to Xen'drik. The motivation for this extraplanar incursion remains a mystery, but the giant records portray the quori simply as ruthless invaders. Other evidence suggests that the quori merely sought refuge from a disaster on their own plane, or even retaliation against acts of aggression instigated by the lords of Xen'drik. Whatever the root of the war, it was a struggle that lasted for centuries. Powerful mystical and psionic forces were unleashed by both sides, and, in time, nearly all the arcane knowledge the giants possessed was turned to the war effort. In Argonnessen, students of the draconic Prophecy warned that this struggle could shake the planes themselves, but the Conclave insisted that the dragons stand aloof. The outcome is known to any student of history; the giants unleashed forces that tore Dal Quor from its orbit, bringing a sudden and terrible end to the conflict.

The giants' gambit devastated their continent and shook the foundations of Eberron. Their former slaves, the elves, rose up against their weakened masters. Desperate, the giants began harnessing power once more, preparing to unleash the same forces that had vanquished Dal Quor. Perhaps they thought victory was possible, but many historians believe it was pure nihilism—if the titans couldn't rule the world, they would destroy it.

The dragons saw the threat traced out in the Prophecy. Shocked and alarmed at the effect of the forces already unleashed by the giants, this time they chose to act. A scaled army poured forth from Argonnessen, with flights of all colors led by the militant wyrms of the Light of Siberys. The conflict was brutal, and its outcome never in doubt. The dragons had no interest in holding territory. They made no effort to avoid civilian casualties; they brought fire, fang, and epic magic to bear in the most destructive ways imaginable. In the end, nothing was left of the proud nations of Xen'drik. Giant, elf, and all other cultures of the land were laid low by the dragons, and powerful curses ensured that the giants would never again threaten the world. Their mission accomplished, the dragons returned to Argonnessen to brood. All agreed that the people of Xen'drik would never have posed such a threat if the dragons had not shared the secrets of magic. The Conclave called the event *kurash Ourelonastrix*—Aureon's Folly—and forbade any flight from sharing the secrets of Argonnessen with lesser beings.

THE ELF-DRAGON WARS

Although the destruction of Xen'drik was monumental, some of the continent's denizens did survive. While the dragons brooded, elf refugees established the nation of Aerenal. Thousands of years of research into necromancy and the energies of Argonnessen produced the Undying Court, an alliance of deathless elves with a gestalt power that rivaled the Overlords of the first age. Since that time—nearly twenty-five thousand years before the founding of Galifar—dragons and elves have been at war. The tides of strife ebb and flow, and centuries might pass between battles . . . but sooner or later the dragons return to fight once more. The basis of this age-old conflict, and its conduct, is another of the mysteries of Argonnessen.

Many find it impossible to imagine that the Aereni could stand against the force that utterly destroyed Xen'drik. In truth, the elves have never faced the full power of Argonnessen. The strike on Xen'drik was carried out by the full, unified force of Argonnessen; the elf–dragon wars have involved only a few flights from the Light of Siberys. The fact that the Undying Court has been able to hold off the dragons remains an impressive feat, but it has not faced the power that ravaged a continent.

Those who study this puzzling behavior ask: Why not? What motivates this seemingly endless struggle? If the dragons truly wish to eliminate the elves, why don't they commit their full forces to the task? If they don't care enough to do so, why do they continue to fight in such piecemeal fashion?

One theory is that the dragons despise the extensive practice of necromancy, even when it draws on the positive energy of Irian, but do not view it with the same abhorrence as the giants' planar studies. Thus, they cannot agree en masse that Aerenal should be laid low.

Another possibility is that the struggle is a form of exercise for the dragons, a proving ground for the younger warriors of the Light of Siberys. Conversely, it might be that the wars are fought to test the elves and harden them for some future conflict, just as a soldier will sharpen his blade in preparation for battles to come. The dragons might be unwilling to share the secrets of their power with lesser races, but they can still push the lower creatures to reach their full potential. The long struggle with the dragons has certainly forced the Aereni wizards and Tairnadal warriors to master the arts of war and magic.

The lords of Argonnessen offer no explanations for their actions, nor do they negotiate. Only two instances of elves and dragons working side by side are known, and both involve the noble line of the House of Vol. Following the appearance of the Mark of Death, a number of green dragons began working with the line of Vol. This alliance produced the half-green dragon Erandis. Allies of Vol claim that this was intended to forge a bond between the two races and bring an end to the wars. Others believe that the emerald dragons sought to gain control of the Mark of Death through their half-dragon offspring. In the end, Erandis d'Vol did unite Aerenal and Argonnessen . . . in a quest to eradicate the line of Vol. But this alliance was short-lived and involved minimal communication between the allies. Once the house of Vol fell into shadow, the dragons returned to Argonnessen, and in a few centuries the cycle of war began anew.

VVARAAK'S BETRAYAL

Throughout time, rogue dragons have pursued their own agendas and dreams. Still, in the aftermath of Aureon's Folly and the destruction of Xen'drik, few dared to share the secrets of Argonnessen with lesser creatures. One such rebel was the Emerald Claw, father of Erandis d'Vol, and it destroyed him. A more well-regarded rogue was Vvaraak, the black dragon who trained the first Gatekeepers, and brought the secrets of druidic magic to Khorvaire. A true child of Eberron, Vvaraak foresaw a disaster that would wound the world itself. The Conclave had no interest in this struggle; just as the dragons had stood aside while the giants of Xen'drik battled Dal Quor, the elders of the Conclave told Vvaraak that they would act when a clear threat to Argonnessen existed, and not before.

Frustrated, Vvaraak abandoned her elders and her flight, traveled across the world, and began training humanoids and other creatures in the use of natural magic. Although she is best known for teaching the orcs of the west coast of Khorvaire, Vvaraak had other students. Some Seren druids attribute their skill to the teachings of the Ebon Mother, and lizardfolk boast Gatekeepers in Q'barra and Xen'drik. Vvaraak stayed in the Shadow Marches for less than a century, and her final fate is unknown. Perhaps she lived out her final days in humanoid form, moving among her students and hiding from the angry Eyes of Chronepsis. Perhaps she descended into Khyber to teach the derro and other denizens of the deep. Some say that she returned to Argonnessen, that her act of rebellion was actually a carefully calculated move on behalf of the Conclave. If so, it could be that the dragons subtly planned and implemented both the destruction of the Dhakaani Empire and the defeat of the daelkyr.

Of course, it's possible that the Xoriat incursion was not the threat Vvaraak foresaw. If this is the case, what monumental danger still lies ahead?

DRAGONMARKS AND THE CHAMBER

The Prophecy is constantly evolving. As the actions of the present open new paths to the future, these routes are revealed in stone and storm, in the convergent motions of moon and plane. A few thousand years ago—within the estimated life span of a gold dragon—the Prophecy revealed itself in a new form.

Dragonmarks.

Traced across the flesh of a number of the lesser races, these sigils are more than a source of mystic power. To a student of the draconic Prophecy, the actions of the dragonmarked provide insight into the paths of the Prophecy, much as a lesser augur might read hints of the future in the movements of birds. The appearance of the dragonmarks sent shock waves across Argonnessen. Why were the marks appearing on humanoids instead of the far more ancient and nobler dragons? Would this give humanoids the power to shift the path of the Prophecy? Some declared that this transition from stone to short-lived flesh was a sign that the Prophecy was nearing its end . . . an end that would herald the death of Eberron and the birth of a new reality.

Many among the militant Light of Siberys urged the Conclave to destroy the dragonmarked, to prevent the Lords of Dust or other enemies from using them. Other dragons argued that this was a manifestation of the will of Eberron, and destroying it would be a blasphemous act that could have cataclysmic results. While the Conclave considered, a new voice was heard in the tumult. Young dragons of all colors challenged the passive philosophy of their elders. The world was changing; this new age called for direct observation and, when necessary, manipulation of the lesser beings. After long debate, the Conclave agreed to give the members of this new movement a chance to explore their theories. Stern warnings were issued about empowering Tiamat, however, and a set of guidelines limiting involvement was drafted. Freed, at least in part, from the restrictions that branded Vvaraak and others anathema, the younger dragons formed the territory known as the Tapestry in Argonnessen. A select few were chosen to travel across the world, to monitor the dragonmarked, to search for other signs of the Prophecy, and to oppose the Lords of Dust and others who worked against the interests of Argonnessen. This group is known as *Calemaryx*—the Chamber.

Over the course of the last three thousand years, the Chamber has spread across Eberron. Its agents are concentrated in Khorvaire, since this is the center of the dragonmarked, a stronghold of the Lords of Dust, and the nexus for events involving the Prophecy. Many dragons are still dubious about the mission of the Chamber, and the Eyes of Chronepsis are always ready to eliminate any agent of the Chamber who goes too far. It is a dangerous life, but those who serve the Chamber are shaping the future of Eberron.

TIAMAT RISING

For most in Eberron, dragons are creatures of myth and legend. Bards sing of the struggle between Prince Thrane and the Burning Dragon, and the Gatekeepers pay homage to Vvaraak. Still, few of the lesser races expect to ever see a dragon.

Recently, purported sightings of dragons are becoming more common. Tales of dragons joining in battles during the Last War have been heard. More than one adventuring party has returned to civilization with tales of dragon encounters. The settlers of Q'barra claim that a dragon-fiend named Rhashaak lurks in the deep jungle. Many report that dragons can be found in areas outside Argonnessen, whether hidden in urban shadows or desolate lairs.

In truth, the number of dragons abroad is greater than it has been since the fall of the giants. The Eyes of Chronepsis have relaxed their watch since the formation of the Chamber, and the number of rogue dragons has grown dramatically. Most rogues keep a low profile, hiding among humanity or manipulating events from the shadows. But dragons do exist in the world, and in far greater numbers than most people imagine.

And now Tiamat is stirring once more. Her cult is gaining followers among both dragons and nondragons. The spawn of Tiamat are appearing in increasing numbers, bursting forth from corrupted eggs. The Light of Siberys is working ceaselessly to reinforce the wards in the Pit of Five Sorrows and to hunt down the Talons of Tiamat within Argonnessen. But her cultists have spread to other lands, and it could be only a matter of time before the Daughter of Khyber returns to threaten the world.

USING DRAGONS

Dragons have a great deal to offer any Eberron campaign. Physically, they are terrifying and imposing foes, and at times that might be all the DM needs from a dragon. But dragons can be far more than just monsters. When creating a dragon, think about his achievements, his enemies, and the role he has played in history. Consider Coralonyn, a gold great wyrm. He is older than the kingdom of Galifar itself; in fact, he rode at Galifar's side in human form, as a spy for the Chamber. Through his studies of the Prophecy, he possesses knowledge of the past and of the possible paths of the future. He has fought rakshasas in the Demon Wastes, and gazed on Tiamat's prison in the Pit of Five Sorrows. He spent a decade as a Lhazaar prince and a century studying ruins in Xen'drik. Coralonyn is immensely powerful physically, but he is far more. He has knowledge it would take a human fourteen lifetimes to gain. He has contacts across the world, and has negotiated with angels and argued with kings. With force of will and the sorcerous power of his blood, he can make his very wishes reality. In sum, a dragon is one of the most impressive creatures adventurers will meet, and an encounter with a dragon should always be memorable.

The vast majority of the dragons of Eberron live in Argonnessen, hidden from prying eyes. Dragons encountered in the wider world could be agents of Argonnessen, tied to the Chamber, the Eyes of Chronepsis, or one of the other power groups of the dragon homeland. Also, rogue dragons are scattered across the world. Some are exiles. Some are rebels, who seek a philosophical or physical freedom unavailable in Argonnessen. And some are born and raised in distant lands, and know nothing of the ways of Argonnessen. These rogues have little in common with each other. Most seek to avoid contact and conflict with other dragons. Others enjoy matching wits with others of their kind.

ROLES

A dragon can play many roles in an adventure. The physical and mystical prowess of a dragon makes it a fearsome challenge for adventurers. Alternatively, the knowledge and wealth of a dragon can make it a valuable ally or patron. When designing a dragon of Eberron, consider which of these roles it is likely to fill.

THE ALLY

Understanding a dragon's motivation is a vital part of creating an ally for a group of adventurers. Most dragons consider other creatures to be inferior, beings whose lives have little meaning when placed against the fate of dragons or the sweep of the draconic Prophecy. Is this dragon a temporary ally, aiding the adventurers only because doing so serves his own needs? Is he a true altruist, who wants to use his power to help as many creatures as possible? Or has he formed a bond to members of a particular race, nation, or family? The answers to these questions will determine just what sort of aid characters can expect—and whether the dragon will stay at their side or turn on them.

Once his motivation is clear, a dragon ally can assist a party of adventurers in a number of ways.

Wealth: Even if a dragon never reveals its true nature, it might use its vast wealth to finance an expedition or otherwise assist a group of adventurers.

Spells: The dragons have forgotten more about magic than any lesser race has ever learned. A dragon ally can be a source for virtually any spell a DM wants to bring into the game. This could range from previously unknown sorcerer spells to entirely new traditions, such as pact magic (*Tome of Magic*) or soulmelds (*Magic of Incarnum*). After all, Vvaraak introduced nondragons to druidic magic; who knows what secrets the dragons have kept to themselves?

Knowledge: Setting aside the Prophecy, an elder dragon can draw on centuries of personal experience. A dragon might know the locations of ancient battlefields, ruined temples, prisons of evil spirits, or crypts holding long-hidden artifacts.

Power: If a party of adventurers is facing a mighty zakya warlord or similarly dreadful threat, the pure physical prowess of a dragon can be an invaluable tool.

One possible dragon ally is Qataakhast (page 120), who might assist adventurers battling rogue dragons in Sarlona.

THE GUARDIAN

The guardian dragon dedicates her life to defending Argonnessen or the world against a particular threat. In the wider world, guardians are often tied to specific locations. Such a dragon might watch over a ruin that serves as the prison of a rakshasa rajah. She could defend a network of caverns where signs of the Prophecy often appear. She might make her lair on an area of planar instability, holding this line against extraplanar invaders. Or she could protect a dangerous artifact that cannot be destroyed.

Adventurers are often set against guardian dragons; a party searching for a relic hidden in Haka'torvhak must deal with Rhashaak to claim the prize (*Explorer's Handbook* 145). However, a guardian dragon can also prevent adventurers from unleashing terrible forces—or help repair the damage after the fact.

Zartarxis (page 152) is a reluctant guardian assigned to the ruins of Xen'drik.

THE PRIEST

Religion is a powerful force in the lives of many dragons, and it could be the basis for an adventure or campaign. The lurking threat of Tiamat is a constant factor in the schemes of Argonnessen, and PCs might be drawn into this struggle. A group of characters might need to commune with Chronepsis—a task they can accomplish only by finding a hidden shrine to the dragon deities and convincing the priest to work with them. A dragon might receive a vision from Io instructing him to lead humanity onto the path of the Ninefold Dragon, breaking a barrier that has existed since the first age and causing a bitter rift within Argonnessen itself.

The Sovereign paths (page 30) are another aspect of draconic religion that could affect an adventure. What happens when a dragon decides to declare itself a Sovereign incarnate? Will soldiers flock to the banner of Dol Dorn reborn—and how might a dragon use such an army?

THE PROPHET

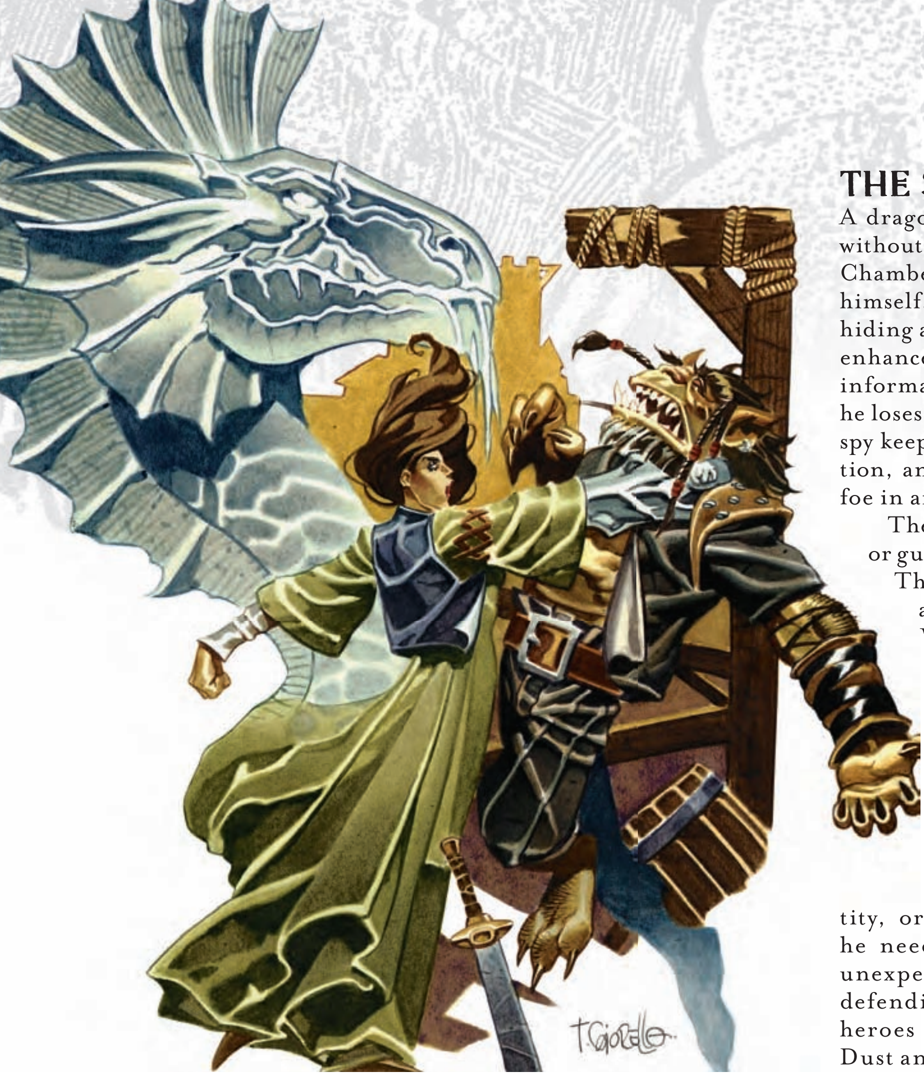
Plenty of prophecies, augurs, and oracles exist in the world. But none are as powerful and far-reaching as the draconic Prophecy. It can play a role in any encounter with dragons. An ally might help the party to fulfill a particular path, while a guardian protects an artifact to steer the future away from certain events. But the Prophecy can also be the entire reason for an encounter. When adventurers face a great evil, the Prophecy could hold the only key to shifting the course of the future—and the heroes must find a prophet to show them the way.

Dragon prophets occasionally train nondragons to aid them in their work; such agents belong to the dragon prophet prestige class (*MoE* 63).

Vyssilthar (page 99) is an accomplished student of the Prophecy living in Khorvaire.

THE RAVAGER

The dragons of Eberron can be cunning manipulators and wise scholars. But you don't always want a mastermind; sometimes you need a monster. These are the ravagers. Some are dragons driven mad by magic or tragedy. Others are born outside the company of other dragons, growing wild and feral in isolation. And some simply revel in their raw power and are truly happy only when they are spreading devastation and terror among lesser beings. Whether a ravager is driven by pure bloodlust or a desire for the treasures



An agent of the Chamber uses her hidden strength ability against a would-be assailant

of lesser creatures, he is the dragon to use when you want a glorious battle.

Haze-of-Death (page 95) roams the ruins of Cyre. Twisted by the Mourning, this fearsome ravager preys on any living creature unfortunate enough to cross his path.

THE RULER

Dragons are among the mightiest creatures in Eberron, and not all of them enjoy solitude. Some crave worship. Some see the domination of lesser creatures as a glorious game. And others genuinely seek to improve the lives of the beings they rule, guiding and protecting their subjects.

The tone of an encounter with a dragon ruler varies considerably based on her relationship with her subjects. If she rules through terror, her victims might provide shelter to adventurers, all the while begging for aid and freedom. On the other hand, if the dragon is a popular ruler, adventurers who seek the treasures of her hoard could face stiff opposition from her subjects. Even an evil ruler might be the only force maintaining order or protecting her subjects from a neighboring threat. If the adventurers slay the dragon, they could actually doom her "victims."

Dawnwing (page 67) is the ruler of a dominion in the Vast of Argonnessen. Gornath (page 124) has carved out a domain in Sarlona.

THE SPY

A dragon can play a significant role in an adventure without ever being seen. A spy could be an agent of the Chamber, an Eye of Chronepsis, or a rogue serving only himself. Whatever his agenda, a dragon spy specializes in hiding among humanity. His feats, skills, and spells all enhance his abilities to conceal his true nature, gather information, and confound enemy divination. Though he loses much of his physical might in human form, the spy keeps his Hit Dice, spell resistance, damage reduction, and sorcerer levels; a great wyrm is a dangerous foe in any form.

The role of the spy can overlap with that of the ally or guardian, but the true spy is defined by two things. The first is his mission. He could seek information, a lost artifact, or the exposure of a rakshasa plot. Whatever it is, he has a job to do, and this colors his interaction with the party.

The second trait of the spy is his invisibility. A dragon who works closely with adventurers is an ally; the spy maintains an aura of mystery. He is more likely to manipulate adventurers to serve his purposes than to deal with them openly. He could impersonate a friend of theirs, deliver messages without revealing his identity, or otherwise trick the party into doing what he needs. Adventures involving a spy often have unexpected consequences; a seemingly routine job defending an airship from sky pirates could draw heroes into a complex plot involving the Lords of Dust and Erandis d'Vol. When the adventure is over, the PCs might finally find out the truth. Or they could deal with the dragon a number of times before revelations occur.

If a spy's mission overlaps with the goals of the adventurers, they can find the partnership a profitable one. But a spy is not an ally of the adventurers, and working with him can often draw heroes into dangerous situations.

ALIGNMENT

Eberron is a world drawn in shades of gray; there, the alignment of a dragon isn't bound to its color. Indeed, it is difficult to tie Eberron dragons to any single alignment. Although the noted alignment of a dragon can be used as a general guideline for behavior and demeanor, dragons are fundamentally inhuman. They are creatures of primal magic, they measure their lives in centuries, and those who study the Prophecy see time and fate in ways lesser races can't begin to understand. Most dragons simply do not consider the lives of nondragons in their contemplations. Both good and evil dragons could participate in the utter destruction of a human city, if it was dictated by the broader scope of destiny or politics. The difference is that the evil dragon would consider this sport and revel in his cruelty, while the good dragon would seek to make the end as swift and painless as possible.

Irrelevance is a danger the lesser races always face when dealing with dragons. The Chamber stands against demons and darkness, but ultimately it serves the interests of the dragons, and its plans are tied to schemes that stretch over centuries, both past and future. Regardless of alignment—noble or selfish, kind or cruel—a dragon could be an ally one day and a ruthless enemy the next. Adventurers might be more comfortable in the presence of a good dragon than an evil one, but they should never forget the inhuman nature of their erstwhile ally.

COLOR

Although dragons are often referred to as one group, each color is in fact a separate subrace. Each thrives in different climates, and has a divergent range of physical and magical capabilities. In Eberron, color is not tied to alignment, and likewise, personality is affected by many factors beyond color. A Storm Guardian of Adar, a feral ravager in Xen'drik, and a denizen of Argonnessen could all be blue dragons, but they are very different in outlook and behavior.

Moreover, the colors don't define allies and enemies. The Chamber is composed of dragons of all colors. Within Argonnessen, dragons of different colors live and serve together in a number of territories.

So what does color mean?

To begin with, it is a sign of power. A typical gold dragon is stronger and smarter than a typical white dragon of similar age. This hierarchy of might has been established and ingrained in the dragon psyche since the wars of the first age. It is only one factor taken into account in social situations—age is considerably more important—but it is nonetheless an important aspect of draconic interactions.

The social status of color is also tied to the longer natural life span of metallic dragons. As a result, the

HIDDEN DRAGONS

In Eberron, the ability to assume humanoid form is not limited to certain dragons; with proper training and dedication, any dragon can master this gift. Dragons that specialize in shapeshifting have developed a number of feats and at least one spell to enhance their abilities in humanoid form.

ALTERNATE FORM

You have unlocked the power to move unseen within the human world.

Prerequisites: True dragon, sorcerer level 5th.

Benefit: You gain the alternate form supernatural ability (Medium or smaller animal or humanoid only) and can use it three times per day.

If you already have the alternate form ability, you gain access to the alternate forms given in parentheses above and can use the ability three additional times per day.

Normal: Only bronze, gold, and silver dragons possess the alternate form ability.

HALF-DRAGON FORM

You can assume a half-dragon form, allowing you to retain some of the physical prowess of your true form while still being able to move among humans.

Prerequisites: True dragon, ability to assume humanoid form, sorcerer level 5th.

Benefit: You can expend a use of your alternate form ability to take the form of a Medium or smaller humanoid with the half-dragon template. You also gain the following abilities:

- +4 natural armor.
- Size: based on humanoid kind.
- Natural weapons: two claws (1d4 for a Medium creature, 1d3 for Small) and one bite (1d6 for a Medium creature, 1d4 for Small).
- Breath weapon: You can use your usual breath weapon. However, the area of the effect is determined as if you were a dragon of your current size, and damage is limited to a maximum of 12 dice.
- Physical abilities are set to Strength 18, Dexterity 10, Constitution 12. These are modified by the standard racial modifiers of the apparent race.

Normal: The alternate form ability cannot be used to take the shape of templated creatures.

HIDDEN STRENGTH

When you assume a humanoid form, you retain some of your draconic strength.

Prerequisites: True dragon, ability to assume humanoid form, sorcerer level 5th.

Benefit: When using alternate form, you receive up to a +8 bonus to Strength and a +4 bonus to Constitution; these bonuses cannot provide you with a Strength or Constitution score greater than what you possess in dragon form.

Normal: When a dragon is in an alternate form, its physical ability scores are average for its shape.

STRENGTH OF THE TRUE FORM

Transmutation
Level: Sorcerer 1
Components: V
Casting Time: 1 immediate action
Range: Personal
Duration: 1 round
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

Strength and power flows through your limbs, and blows rebound off flesh that is suddenly as hard as steel.

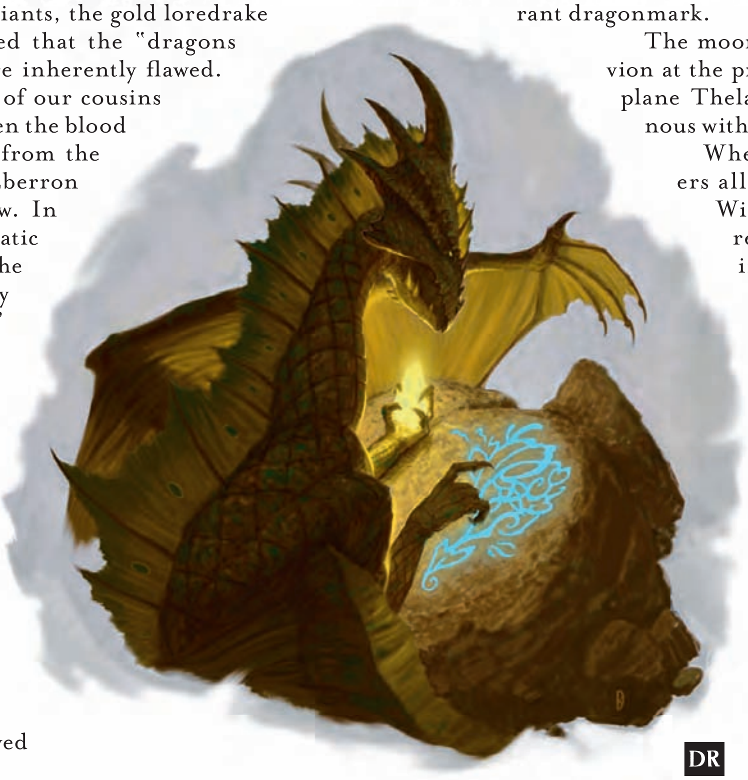
This spell can be cast only by a creature that has been altered due to the use of *polymorph,* alternate form, or a similar effect. Compare the natural armor, damage reduction, and physical ability scores of the caster's current and original forms; for the duration of the spell, the caster uses the highest value in each category. This spell has no visible effect.

If the caster has the Silent Spell feat, he can apply it to this spell without increasing the casting time.

Although this spell was first developed by dragons, sorcerers of any race can master it; in particular, the rakshasas of the Lords of Dust often make use of this spell.

oldest dragons of Argonnessen are metallic, giving them considerable influence when the Conclave comes together. Some chromatic dragons view this as a challenge and strive to exceed the achievements of the metallic elders. Others conclude that they must seek glory beyond Argonnessen, working with the Chamber or going rogue.

Tiamat. The Daughter of Khyber has the power to corrupt any dragon, but the chromatic dragons are more vulnerable to her influence. As a result, the spawn of Tiamat are typically chromatic. After Tiamat stirred in the Age of Giants, the gold loredrake Ourenilach proclaimed that the "dragons of the base colors" were inherently flawed. "The shorter life span of our cousins is proof," he said. "When the blood of mighty Siberys fell from the sky, it mingled with Eberron and the Dragon Below. In the case of our chromatic cousins, it is clear that the blood was corrupted by contact with Khyber." Ourenilach's calls for a crusade to eliminate all chromatic dragons have found few supporters, either then or now, but some rogues and even entire flights subscribe to this theory of metallic supremacy. It has even inspired young and rebellious chromatic dragons to join the Talons of Tiamat, embracing this perceived bond to Khyber.



It takes centuries to unlock the mysteries of the draconic Prophecy

Ultimately, color determines the physical and magical capabilities of a dragon. A white dragon thrives in the cold, while a silver dragon might make its lair in the clouds. But personality and relations with both dragons and nondragons varies from dragon to dragon, and the color of a dragon's scales is just one factor in this.

Religion

Dragons rarely talk about their faith, but behind this silence, religion is an important factor for many. The primary dragon religion is called Thir, a Draconic word meaning "three." More information about the dominant religion of Argonnessen can be found in Chapter One.

Those dragons that reject Thir follow many different paths. Some are atheists, some worship the draconic Prophecy as a living force, and some are convinced of their own divinity; these latter dragons often enslave humanoids and demand worship. A few dragons serve the Silver Flame, and others have embraced the Blood of Vol. Although Thir is the faith of the typical dragon, DMs can incorporate any religion that meets the needs of the story.

Using the Prophecy

A strange pattern appears on the wall of a deep cavern—a spiraling series of lines, vaguely reminiscent of Draconic characters.

A child is born to two full-blooded members of House Cannith, but even at birth she bears an aberrant dragonmark.

The moon Aryth eclipses Lharvion at the precise moment that the plane Thelanis becomes coterminous with Eberron.

When a dragon sage gathers all these facts, she nods. With a few words, she records her conclusions in the spellshard that lies before her. One more path to the future—one more piece of the draconic Prophecy—has been revealed.

The Prophecy is a core element of the EBERRON campaign setting. Dragon and fiend battle over its outcome. It might call for a reluctant adventurer to take on the mantle of hero—or it might warn of dire consequences if adventurers slay a hated foe.

But what is the draconic Prophecy? And what are effective ways to use it in a campaign?

Source and Purpose

None can question the power of the draconic Prophecy. Its power as a tool of divination has been proven time and again. But philosophers and sages—human and dragon, celestial and fiend—have long debated the source of its power. How can the paths of the future be mapped out on stone and sky? Is this proof of divine intervention . . . or does such a concrete cosmic plan defy the existence of free-willed gods?

Tens of thousands of years of debate and divination have produced no clear answers. Here are a few of the popular theories; only the DM can decide if any of these are true.

- The Prophecy is a reflection of the ongoing struggle between Khyber and Eberron. The Progenitors shaped reality at the beginning of time, and the Prophecy reflects their divergent desires for their creation. This is the central belief of the dragon religion Thir.

- The Prophecy is the work of the dragon deity Chronepsis, master of fate. The core doctrine of Thir says that Chronepsis is the scribe of the Progenitors. However, certain dragons believe that Chronepsis alone chooses the path of the Prophecy.
- The Prophecy is the creation of Aureon, Sovereign of Law and Lore. This is the popular theory of followers of the Sovereign Host. The doctrine of Thir acknowledges Aureon—Ourelonastrix—as the first prophet, but not as the creator of the Prophecy.
- The Prophecy is a divine force, not unlike the Silver Flame. It draws its power from all living beings. It is shaped by their desires, and it channels their wants. This is how it can predict the future, because it influences people to act in accordance with its predictions.
- Each of the thirteen Outer Planes has an underlying consciousness. Eberron is where the planes converge, and the Prophecy is the result of the debate between these planar voices.
- The Prophecy is the ultimate source of magical energy. Magic has the power to reshape reality, and the draconic Prophecy is the ultimate expression of this.

Even those who agree on the nature of the Prophecy argue about its purpose. For much of the history of Argonnessen, the followers of Thir have held to the belief that the Prophecy is the record of creation, and that the purpose of the dragons is to watch and record until creation runs its course. This means they can prevent others from tampering with the course of destiny, but should not manipulate it themselves.

The dragons of the Chamber counter that Ourelonastrix and Hezcalipa used their knowledge of the Prophecy to defeat the Overlords in the Age of Demons. These dragons claim that the Prophecy is a tool, a gift to allow those wise enough to read it some control over the future. In their view, dragons should be on guard against other forces who seek to control this power. The Lords of Dust have always sought to use the Prophecy as a weapon against their foes. The elves of the Undying Court have unraveled many of its mysteries. Now, some among the lesser nondragons seek to use the Prophecy as a tool, if they can only master its secrets.

Ultimately, the Dungeon Master must decide if mortals are meant to tamper with the Prophecy. The consequences of this decision are explored below.

THE NATURE OF THE PROPHECY

The draconic Prophecy has existed since the dawn of time. Dragons and demons have sought its power.

But what is the Prophecy? What form does it take? How can people fight over its outcome? And how can an infallible prophecy work in a game that is, ultimately, defined by player choices?

The key is that the draconic Prophecy is a living thing. It has never been fully recorded because it is constantly growing and evolving. The Prophecy is a map showing many paths that the future might take, and revealing dependencies. Consider the following:

If the King of Breland is assassinated on the day of the gargoyle's first victory, there will be war in the west. If there is war between Droaam and Breland, and if the last child of the storm faces the three daughters, the first hag will return.

This is the nature of the Prophecy. It is a web that is constantly unfolding, and the future is formed by threads from thousands of evolving events. This is how the Chamber and the Lords of Dust use the Prophecy as a weapon. Find an outcome you desire, then trace back the path of events that will make it happen. If the Lords of Dust want Sora Kell to return, they must see to it that King Boranel is slain on the same day that Carralag the gargoyle wins the Race of Eight Winds in Sharn. This will lead to war . . . and that paves the way for the next convergence they wish to control. Meanwhile, if the Chamber can prevent Carralag's victory or Boranel's death, it has staved off this fate . . . though it might have set another path in motion. This is the trick to dealing with the Lords of Dust and the Chamber; both groups are often working toward long-term goals that can't even be seen without the use of the Prophecy. The Chamber might help stop a massacre, or it might cause a massacre—in either case the dragons care nothing about the victims. They are concerned only with the chain of events that are set in motion, and it might take years, decades, or longer for matters to play out.

FORM OF THE PROPHECY

Typically, adventurers encounter the Prophecy in one of three ways.

Signs and Portents: A convergence of moons and planes. A symbol revealed by an earthquake. Three dragonmarked heirs slain by fire. These are some of the ways in which the Prophecy is made manifest. But taken alone, none of these manifestations have meaning. It's like glancing at tea leaves or seeing two crows on a dead oak tree—without proper training, the omen cannot be interpreted. And the draconic Prophecy is far more complex than tea leaves or tarot cards. In the examples given above, all three of the events could be linked together. Moon, rune, and deaths are all pieces of the puzzle, and knowledge of past events might be just as crucial to success. Most creatures require decades to learn to interpret the simplest signs of the Prophecy, and it takes centuries to truly understand it. Even among the long-lived dragons, few have the patience and intelligence required to become true prophets. As such, adventurers rarely find a piece of the Prophecy that they can interpret on their own; instead, they need to find someone who can help them understand its meaning.

In the past, the symbols that appeared on the earth were called dragonmarks. These days, they are usually called Prophecy marks. The design of these marks is quite similar to those found on flesh, but every mark is different; each line has meaning to one who knows how to read them. If a character who speaks Draconic makes a DC 30 Spellcraft check, she gains a hint about the meaning of a mark, to a maximum of five words. For example, she might recognize the concepts of "king," "victory," and "moving stone." Although interesting, this hint rarely provides full meaning, and might actually be misleading.

A small Prophecy mark might be the size of a human fist. The largest marks are so big that they can be seen properly only from a great height. All marks radiate a strong aura of universal magic and occasionally shimmer with a blue-green radiance similar to the color of dragonmarks. Prophecy marks slowly repair themselves if damaged. It's possible to remove a small mark whole, but if a mark is simply damaged, it eventually re-forms.

The true nature of Prophecy marks is as mysterious as the Prophecy itself. In Xen'drik, explorers have found eldritch machines from the Age of Giants that seem to use Prophecy marks as a source of power, and many forces in Khorvaire—notably House Cannith, the Twelve, and the elemental binders of Zilargo—are working to unlock this secret.

Translations: A Prophecy mark on a cavern wall won't provide much insight into the Prophecy. The personal notes of a dragon scholar who has spent centuries collecting pieces of the Prophecy? That's another matter. The challenge for humans is that dragons typically use spellshards (*ECS* 265) to record knowledge. A spellshard formed for a dragon is the size of a small boulder. Some dragons prefer to carve their thoughts in stone; many lairs have a chamber of words, and adventurers could find insights about the Prophecy written there. Although few mortal nondragons have truly mastered the draconic Prophecy, a number of sages have studied it, and collected the writings of dragon prophets. Adventurers might find useful translations in the journal of, say, a dead cataclysm mage (*EH* 58).

The dragons of Argonnessen have created many records about the Prophecy. A translation could simply record events of the past—the shape the Prophecy finally took—but even this can be an important tool for interpreting future signs. Some records reveal possibilities—multiple paths that the future can take, depending on what events come to pass. Other dragon writings focus on a single chain of possibility—the path that the writers are working to achieve.

The precise form of these writings varies based on the author. A translation of the Prophecy could take the form of poetry, a formal treatise, or a few cryptic words. It has meaning to the author, but it might still puzzle the random reader.

Prophets: The simplest way to read meaning into the Prophecy is to know someone who can read its signs. The role of the dragon prophet has already been discussed, but other options exist. A deathless elf or disguised rakshasa could offer insight into a path of the Prophecy. A scholar might piece together a translation—imperfect, but something to work with. Or a dragonmarked character could have a sudden and vivid prophetic dream. A gift of Chronepsis? Insight flowing directly from the source of the Prophecy and through his dragonmark? Or part of a devious quori scheme?

THE PROPHECY AS ADVENTURE HOOK

Having considered the origin of the Prophecy and the forms it takes, a question remains. Why use it? What does it bring to an adventure?

Destiny: The draconic Prophecy is one way to establish certain adventurers as people who have a special destiny. The fact that player characters possess action points already suggests that they are favored by fate; the Prophecy can take this a step farther, cementing the fact that they are the only ones who can accomplish certain tasks. This helps even low-level adventurers stand out in the world. They might not be ready to take on the tarrasque now, but they know that some day, they are destined to battle it.

Control: The Prophecy is a tool that holds mighty forces in check. Both the Lords of Dust and the dragons of Argonnessen possess power that dwarfs that of most adventurers. But their knowledge of the Prophecy handicaps them in many ways. For example, the Prophecy could

PROPHETIC SIGNS

Here are several ways the draconic Prophecy could enter a campaign.

- An adventurer finds a spellshard journal that has rough details of his own past and future accomplishments, including finding the shard. Who wrote it? Will the PC try to follow the path it lays out, or create a new future?
- The party finds a dead man clutching a basalt disk, lying next to the corpse of a rakshasa. The stone holds a Prophecy mark, and agents of the Talons of Tiamat, the Chamber, and the Undying Court are all searching for it.
- A dragon prophet presents an adventurer with a magic sword. It's prophesied that the adventurer will fight a champion of darkness hidden somewhere in the city; she has one day to find and defeat him, or she will surely die.
- Adventurers encounter a wizard building an eldritch machine over a large Prophecy mark. The mark has taken on the appearance of an aberrant dragonmark. Is this an innocent experiment, or the first step in a terrible plan?
- An attack by an overwhelming enemy force drives adventurers into a network of caves—a dragon's lair that has been abandoned for thousands of years. Engravings on a cavern wall include the dragon's notes on the Prophecy . . . including cryptic clues that could help the adventurers defeat the enemy hunting them.
- The vault of the Grand Library of Metrol is rumored to hold a copy of the Silaxerus Shard, one of the most complete records of the Prophecy in human hands. Agents of the Chamber want to destroy it. The Library of Korranberg, the Twelve, and Arcanix want to steal it. Prince Oargev wants it returned to Cyran hands. Whom will the adventurers help? And what if the Lords of Dust have already stolen the shard and replaced it with a counterfeit designed to mislead?

reveal that if the dragons defeat the Dreaming Dark, Tiamat will be released; but if the adventurers accomplish the same task, the Daughter of Tiamat will remain bound for another thousand years.

Choice: The Prophecy can be a tool to help the Dungeon Master choose the direction of a campaign. A prophet seeks out the adventurers and reveals that they are at a crossroads of fate. If they follow one path, war arises between Droaam and Breland. If they take the other path, they discover a lost kingdom in Xen'drik, and one among them dons a crown. So . . . do the players want a war campaign? Or an extended adventure in Xen'drik? The prophet doesn't tell them how events will play out—who will wear a crown, or if they will all live or die—but she gives them the opportunity to pick a direction for future adventures.

Battling Fate: Another possible path for a campaign is to reveal a piece of the Prophecy that the adventurers want to prevent from coming to pass. A warrior is destined to kill the one he loves the most. A wizard will unlock the secret of the Mourning . . . and destroy the Five Nations. Is it possible to avoid this fate? Or will the adventurers' attempts to change their destinies actually be the cause of their undoing?

In working with prophecy, ambiguity is a powerful tool. An adventurer will wear a crown . . . but does this mean he will rule a kingdom, or could it be a cursed crown that will give an undead spirit possession of his body? Likewise, a DM could rely on cryptic titles instead of being obvious from the start. The Prophecy might mention the "child of the crimson storm" . . . but it could take time to prove that this is in fact the Lyrandar heir in the party.

ORGANIZATIONS

Dragons are a part of Eberron, and their activities stretch across the world. The following organizations can play important roles in any adventure involving dragons.

THE CHAMBER

The Chamber is a loose alliance. Its members share resources (including their agents), and have established a network of safe houses and support across Khorvaire and Stormreach. The dragons gather and share information, and those with common goals sometimes work together.

Still, the dragons of the Chamber have divergent interests. Some wish to recover lost artifacts from the Age of Demons. Some want to observe the lesser races, to see the role they play in the unfolding Prophecy. Others oppose the Lords of Dust and other forces who seek to manipulate the Prophecy. A few wish to manipulate the Prophecy themselves. All dragons of the Chamber are working in the interests of Argonnessen and the dragons as a race—the Eyes of Chronepsis quickly eliminate a dragon who threatens his homeland. But an outcome that is good for Argonnessen might be devastating for Khorvaire.

Although the dragons of the Chamber cooperate, each dragon has his own network of agents. Dragons of the Chamber rarely fight one another, but if they are competing over a particular turning point in the Prophecy, they have no difficulty setting their agents at odds.

The Chamber is a young organization by draconic standards, fewer than four thousand years old. Most Chamber observers are mature adults or younger. Some older dragons are tied to the Chamber, including those who founded the organization. Most of these elders, however, have returned to Argonnessen to guide activities from the Tapestry, leaving their children to directly manage their interests.

The Chamber can be an excellent patron for adventurers, because its members possess wealth and the knowledge required to draw adventurers into the Prophecy. The key is that the Chamber is unpredictable even as a patron. These dragons are always looking to the distant goal, and even a friendly dragon might sacrifice non-dragon lives for what she sees as the greater good.

Each DM must decide exactly how much influence the Chamber has had on the course of history, but any number of critical events could have been set in motion by the Chamber. It's quite possible that a precursor to the Chamber instigated the migration of humanity to Khorvaire because that group knew it was the only way humans would develop dragonmarks. Likewise, the cabal might have encouraged the formation of Galifar to place limits on the power of the dragonmarked houses. Such discoveries are part of the tone of Eberron—how much of what you take for granted is the result of draconic manipulation?

ADVENTURE SEEDS

Here are a couple of ways to involve the PCs with the Chamber.

Conflict of Interest: The PCs have established a strong working relationship with a Chamber dragon, and they consider her a trustworthy patron. Then they discover that she is sponsoring another group of adventurers, who are performing massacres and assassinations. What do they do?

Hazard Pay: A Chamber dragon offers the party a fantastic reward in exchange for secretly destroying a creation forge purportedly hidden beneath Sharn. Can the PCs find the forge and then overcome the traps laid by Merrix d'Cannith? And are they willing to risk the wrath of the dragonmarked lord?

THE DRALEUS TAIRN

The Draleus Tairn are the smallest faction of the Tairnadal elves of northern Aerenal. Like their Valenar cousins, the Draleus dedicate their lives to the arts of war and to honoring their ancestors. But the Draleus Tairn don't just reenact the deeds of their ancestors; they nourish the spirits of the fallen with the blood of dragons. The Draleus faith holds that the warrior draws strength from victory, and passes this energy to his ancestors . . . and no victory is greater than the defeat of a dragon.

The Draleus Tairn rarely socialize with outlanders, or even other elves. Rumors exist that the Draleus dragon slayers can take the powers of their victims; that their blood burns like dragonfire; that they can spit lightning or breathe acid; and that their blood rituals increase their life span and even imbue them with the strength of the dragon. Perhaps these stories are mere myths. The tales could also reflect the presence of half-dragons or dragon shamans among the Draleus Tairn, with these powers derived from spilled blood instead of shared blood. Under normal circumstances, a dragon shaman would have a difficult time on Aerenal, but due to their isolation and reputation, few elves trouble the dragon slayers.

The Draleus elves have always been found at the forefront of the elf–dragon wars, as much to claim blood for their ancestors as to defend their island home. While they wait for the next battle to begin, Draleus warbands stalk dragons across the length of Eberron, hunting rogues and Chamber agents alike. It is a dangerous calling that demands great skill and cunning, and those who survive are among the deadliest elves in Aerenal.

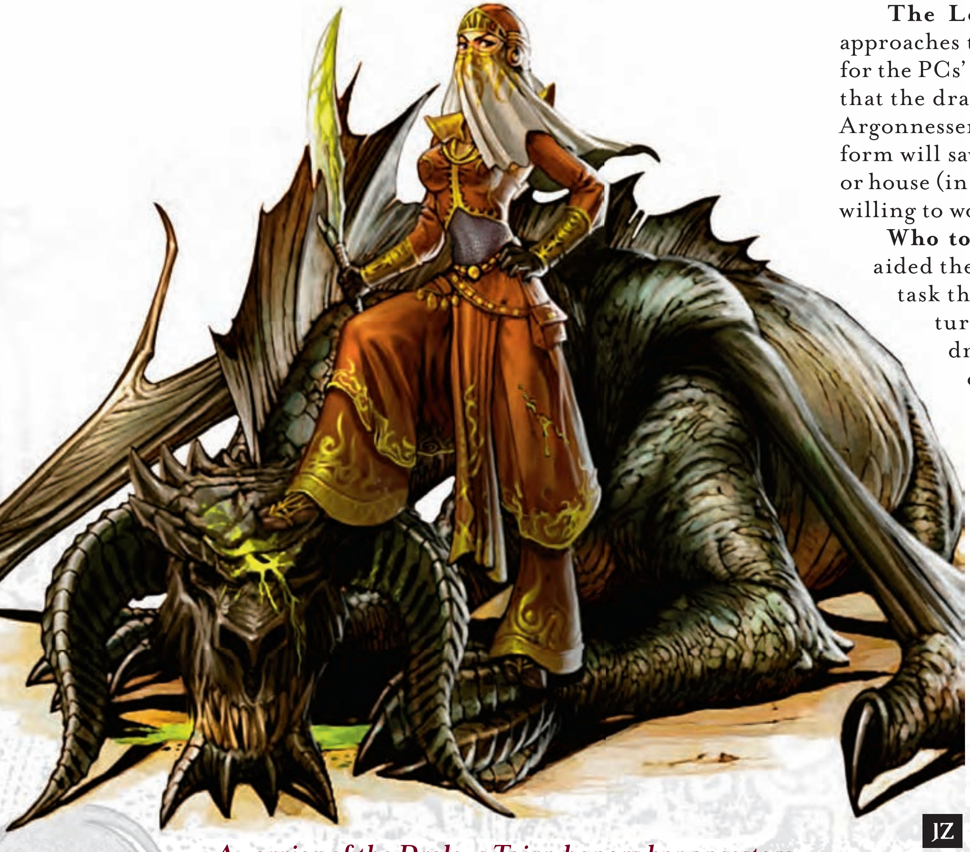
The Draleus Tairn place equal value on martial and magical skill, and wizards and warmages fight alongside more weapon-oriented classes. Their style of dress and choice of weaponry is similar to the Valenar (they are considered to be Valenar for purposes of feats and weapon proficiencies), though they favor dragonbone weapons and armor made from dragonhide.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

The following suggestions can involve a party with the Draleus Tairn.

Rescue Mission: When adventurers working for the Chamber meet with their patron, they find her battered and bloody. She barely escaped from a battle with her life, and a warband of the Draleus Tairn is on her trail. Can the PCs save the dragon from these hunters?

Common Enemy: The wizards of the Draleus Tairn have developed unique spells in their long struggle with dragons. When the PCs are targeted by a corrupt dragon aligned with the Talons of Tiamat, this war magic could be their only hope. Can they find a band of the Draleus Tairn, and somehow convince the elves to share their secret knowledge?



A warrior of the Draleus Tairn honors her ancestors with the blood of her fallen foe

THE LORDS OF DUST

The immortal Lords of Dust still remember the war between dragon and fiend. Many are willing to wait for their vengeance; once the Overlords of the Age of Demons are released, the dragons will suffer. But a few enjoy matching wits with the dragons, whether they target rogues, agents of the Chamber, or the draconic Prophecy itself. As immortals, the sages of the Lords of Dust have had tens of thousands of years to study the Prophecy. A few of the members of the Council of Ashtakala have been fighting a long shadow war with the dragons, using the Prophecy as a battleground. The rakshasas have won their share of victories, and some of the darker events in history could be a result of this manipulation. The rakshasas also enjoying using their knowledge of the Prophecy to set up situations in which the dragon prophets know that draconic interference would have disastrous results in the future; as such, the dragons must either use agents dictated by the Prophecy—adventurers, perhaps—or play into the rakshasas' twisted hands.

Durastoran Wyrmbreaker (LE male ak'chasar rakshasa^{MM3} loremaster 5/fatespinner^{CAr} 5) has been one of the most active lords in this battle over the Prophecy. Wyrmbreaker has a force of lesser fiends and human agents at his disposal, scattered across Khorvaire.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

The PCs can come into conflict with the Lords of Dust in a couple of ways.

The Lesser of Two Evils: A rakshasa openly approaches the party, revealing its true nature. He asks for the PCs' assistance in opposing the Chamber, saying that the dragons are interested only in what's good for Argonnessen. Indeed, the mission he wants them to perform will save humanoid lives and help their homeland or house (in the short term, at least). Are the adventurers willing to work for a fiend?

Who to Trust?: A close ally of the PCs, who has aided them time and again, begs them to perform a task that could save her life. The ensuing adventure leads them into conflict with a Chamber dragon, who says that their friend is a servant of the Wyrmbreaker and that their mission will shift the Prophecy down a dark path. Do they trust their friend and fight the dragon, or abandon an ally on the word of Argonnessen?

THE TALONS OF TIAMAT

One shadow from the Age of Demons continues to haunt the dragons to this day: Tiamat. Even in her prison, Tiamat holds the power to seduce and corrupt dragons . . . and some join her of their own free will, dreaming of the power they will possess when she is freed.

The Talons of Tiamat are the cult of the Daughter of Khyber. Humanoids and fiends allied with Tiamat could possess the half-dragon template; dragons that serve the Daughter of Khyber might gain the half-fiend template as a result of her corrupting touch. The Cult can draw on the spawn of Tiamat, vile creatures born from tainted dragon's eggs. The spawn have always appeared in small numbers in Argonnessen, a lingering reminder of Tiamat's presence. But now the numbers of the spawn are growing, and the Talons of Tiamat are gathering these forces to build an army.

Even though she is bound, Tiamat occasionally stirs in her prison; at these times, she is more conscious and active than any of the other Overlords of the Age of Demons. It's said that she can see through the eyes of any evil dragon, and that she can whisper into the hearts of dragons as they sleep. Her chosen agents can commune with her, and at times they have even summoned aspects of her into the world—far weaker than Tiamat in her full glory, but fearsome nonetheless. Each time that Tiamat has awoken in the past, that event has brought disaster to Argonnessen. Now she is stirring once more, and the prophets say that the doom of Argonnessen could be at hand.

The Talons serve an Overlord of the first age, and rakshasas and other fiends appear among their ranks. As such, they can be seen as a branch of the Lords of Dust. However, the Talons rarely coordinate their actions with the Council of Ashtakala. Most believe that Tiamat is the only true Daughter of Khyber, and the rakshasa rajahs are merely usurpers with delusions of grandeur.

The agents of Tiamat have many goals that could take them into the wider world. They oppose the Chamber and the Eyes of Chronepsis, and adventurers could be caught in the middle of such a conflict. The cultists are gathering artifacts and tools in preparation for war in Argonnessen. They are spreading the spawn of Tiamat across the world, creating hidden nests beneath major cities. Above all, they are working to manipulate the Prophecy in ways that will result in the release of Tiamat. If a Dungeon Master wants to pit adventurers against a significant number of truly evil dragons, the Talons of Tiamat are an excellent choice.

Not all dragons touched by Tiamat serve in her cult. Some simply grow hateful in solitude, giving in to greed and hunger. Any ravager or rogue could be a victim of Tiamat's taint; they might simply terrorize a region, or they could one day be recruited to serve the Talons.

TALONS OF TIAMAT

Draconomicon includes a prestige class called the talon of Tiamat. These deadly warriors are trained by the cult, but they are its elite—not all nondragon members of the cult follow this path. The organization is the Talons of Tiamat; a member of the prestige class is a talon of Tiamat.

Dragon members of the Talons of Tiamat often take levels in the unholy ravager of Tiamat or the bloodscaled fury prestige class, both also found in *Draconomicon*.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

The following ideas can set the PCs against the Talons of Tiamat.

Marked for Death: A member of the party is targeted by the Talons of Tiamat; he must die within a week to force the Prophecy down a particular path. Attacks begin with subtle assassination attempts, and then escalate to attacks by bluespawn godslayers (*MM4* 140). Can the adventurer stay alive until the week is over?

Hard Choices: A group of adventurers discovers the lair of a rogue dragon, only to find that the rogue has been captured by the Talons and is being tormented in a ritual that will ultimately transform him into a half-fiend servant of the cult. Do they try to free the dragon? Kill it? Or abandon it to its fate?

THE TWELVE

The leaders of the Dragonmarked houses aren't fools. Over the course of centuries, they realized the dragons were watching them. It took time, but eventually they discovered the reasons for this observation. The lords of the Twelve learned of the connection between the dragonmarks and the Prophecy, and found out that many dragons believed the dragonmarked should all be destroyed, eradicated as thoroughly as the line of Vol and the Mark of Death. They knew that it might be only a matter of time before the dragons took action.

The barons chose not to share this terrifying discovery with the rank and file of their houses. Two centuries ago, they created a secret division of the Twelve dedicated to draconic affairs. This Wyrmwatch Council pursued a number of paths. Some members focused on the draconic Prophecy, trying to discern if their dragonmarks could directly influence the Prophecy. Others were dedicated to studying dragons and locating or developing spells, tools, or strategies that could give the houses a fighting chance in a war with Argonnessen. The irony of the situation is that these efforts to interfere with the Prophecy are the very acts that could start such a war.

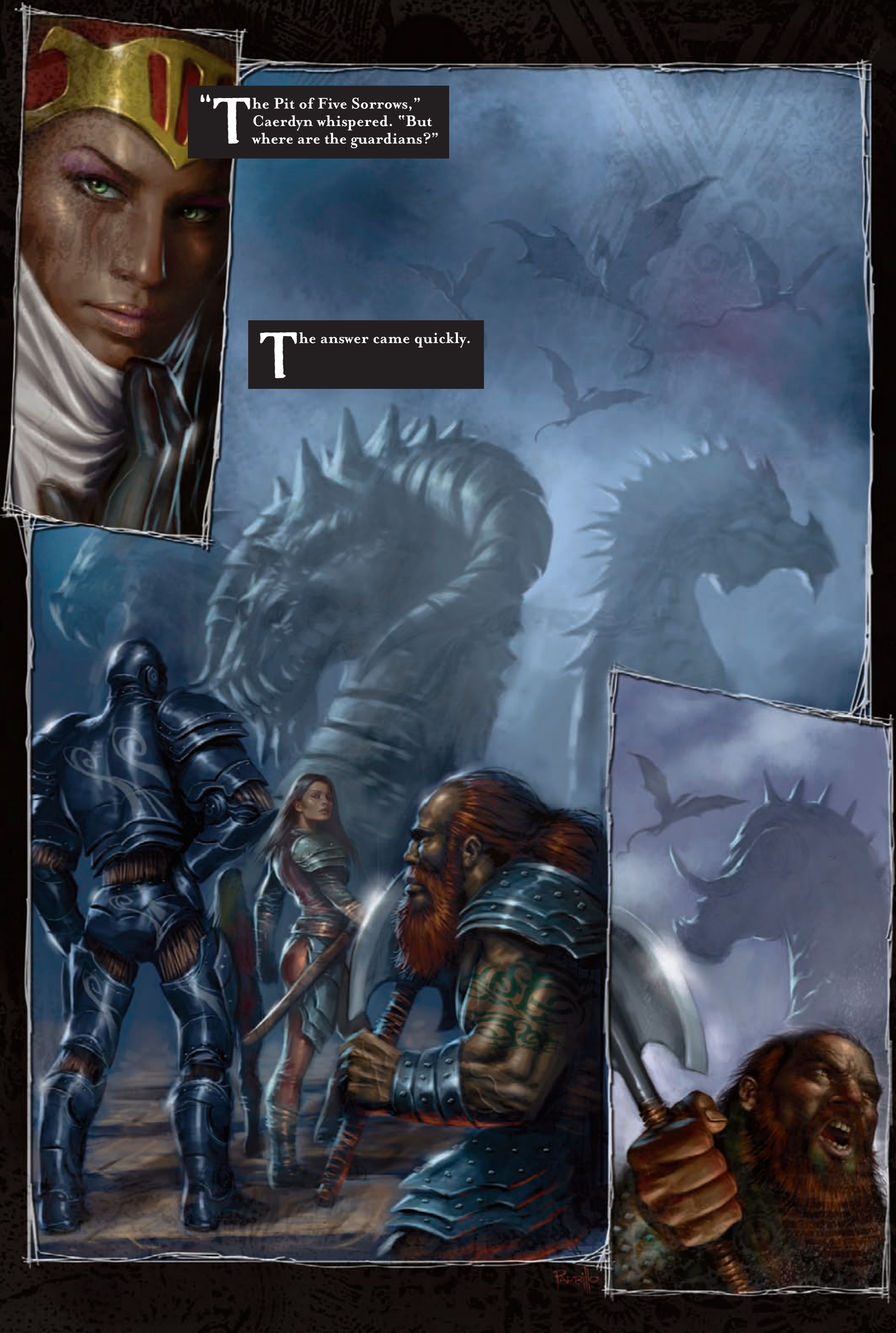
With the onset of the Last War, resources were redirected to take advantage of the conflict. The work of the Council lay idle for almost a century. But now, as peace returns to Khorvaire, the lords of the Twelve have reactivated this unit. Time will tell if this decision was a wise precaution or the prelude to disaster.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

The PCs might become entangled with the Twelve in a couple of ways.

Mysterious Attack: After the party recovers a portable Prophecy mark, it is ambushed by a covert strike force of the Twelve. The attackers employ advanced dragonmark powers but use merciful weapons and nonlethal spells. Will the PCs pry into the secrets of the Twelve, or leave well enough alone?

Doomsday Device: The Twelve is building an eldritch machine that will channel the power of thousands of dragonmarks in an effort to shift the course of the Prophecy. A dragon prophet warns the PCs of the threat, telling them that if they don't destroy the machine, the dragons will—and the Twelve along with it.


"The Pit of Five Sorrows," Caerdyn whispered. "But where are the guardians?"
The answer came quickly.

CHAPTER ONE

DRAGONS OF ARGONNESSEN

> *Some say that if you seek proof of the existence of the gods, you need look no farther than a dragon. What natural design could produce such a glorious being? And if the dragons are the testimony of the divine . . . what secrets must lie hidden in Argonnessen?"*
>
> —Kessler, poet of Sharn

Argonnessen.

It is a name out of legend. It is a blank space on the map, marked with the shadow of a dragon. Distant scrying has allowed mapmakers to trace the continent's major geographic features, but many regions are shielded from remote viewing, and prying too deeply into its mysteries has proven very dangerous. In 750 YK, the famed arcane cartographer Jolian Dan Jessel promised to present the Library of Korranberg with the first true map of Argonnessen. Before the work was completed, Jolian's workshop was burned to the ground, and the gnome himself taken with *trap the soul*. Few events escape the Eyes of Chronepsis, and the wise leave Argonnessen be.

Argonnessen is a land of mystery, and explorers have long dreamed of the wealth and wonders that must lie within. To date, no envoy or merchant has ever breached the Great Barrier and returned to tell the tale. But times are changing. Dragonmarks adorn the skin of the lesser races, heralding a change in the course of the draconic Prophecy. And in the wake of the Last War, new heroes are rising . . . individuals who could change the course of history.

It's time for the secrets of Argonnessen to be revealed.

WELCOME TO ARGONNESSEN

Argonnessen is enormous. It's a continent the size of Khorvaire, with the same diversity of environments found in Khorvaire . . . but without airships, lightning rails, or, for that matter, roads. No inns cater to the hungry adventurer; instead, the land is filled with both dragons and all manner of hungry monsters. What fool would dive into this unknown wilderness?

Despite its dangers and remoteness, Argonnessen has much to offer. The dragons taught the giants of Xen'drik the arts of magic almost sixty thousand years ago. What secrets could a modern wizard wrest from Argonnessen? What mighty artifacts are hidden in the hoards of the great wyrms? What of secret insights into the draconic Prophecy? Knowledge of the future can be more precious than any gold. And don't dismiss the thrill of doing what's never been done, of seizing the chance to become a legend.

GETTING THERE

Getting to Argonnessen is a challenge in its own right. No captain in his right mind sails to the land of the dragons. The Serens challenge anyone who nears Totem Beach, and the guardians of the coast are deadly indeed. Surely other landing points exist? On the map it appears that way, but the waters around Argonnessen are deadly. Wild elementals drift through cloud and sea, and seem to be drawn to elemental vessels. Perhaps this is a natural occurrence, but it seems more likely that the dragons have something to do with it. Sahuagin also pose a threat to the unwary traveler. Worse still, travelers' tales speak of krakens, vast maelstroms that arise without warning, and dragon turtles the size of islands. And then there are the true dragons one could face when Argonnessen is finally in sight.

Perhaps these risks are overstated. Even so, the stories are sufficient to keep House Lyrandar and other merchant captains from risking the wrath of the dragons. Adventurers who want to travel to Argonnessen must acquire their own mode of transportation.

Teleportation is possible. Various forms of remote viewing can allow explorers to spot a suitable touchdown point on the mainland. However, scrying has its dangers. Although the continent isn't completely shrouded, many areas are hidden from prying eyes. Some of these are the direct work of specific dragons, using effects such as that provided by *inscriptions of vacancy* (see the sidebar). Others

INSCRIPTIONS OF VACANCY

This form of lair ward, described on page 85 of *Draconomicon,* is popular with dragons who want to keep their havens safe. Everyone within a cavern adorned with these inscriptions becomes undetectable to scrying. To someone who casts a *scrying* spell, it appears as if the cavern is empty of occupants and devoid of activity, no matter how many individuals are in it or what they are doing.

result from a number of wondrous locations, built over the course of tens of thousands of years to shield vital areas. Some just block divination; others actually lash out with a powerful *scry trap* (*MoE* 101). Prying into the affairs of dragons is a dangerous business.

The safest option is to seek native aid. An invitation from the Chamber—or one of the other powers of Argonnessen—is ideal. Another approach is to deal with the Serens. Occasionally a Seren can be found wandering Khorvaire, or drinking in the taverns of Stormreach. If adventurers earn the trust of such a wanderer, they might at least secure safe passage to Totem Beach. And if they're lucky, their guide might know a path across the Great Barrier and into the interior.

A LAND OF MONSTERS

Argonnessen is a massive place, and the dragons are not numerous. What are the odds of a group of adventurers stumbling onto a dragon right away?

Setting aside the fact that dragons enjoy a good hunt, and that they can use powerful magic to watch the borders . . . perhaps it's not so bad. Maybe a party won't encounter a dragon the instant it reaches the Great Barrier.

But dragons aren't the only dangers Argonnessen has to offer. Huge gray renders. Displacer beast pack lords . . . in packs. Truly horrid umber hulks. War trolls. The tarrasque. Almost any creature can turn up in Argonnessen. How could so many divergent creatures evolve in the same place? They couldn't. The dragons collect creatures from across the world and even the depths of Khyber, letting these monsters loose along the borders and the wild region known as the Vast. These monsters serve both as a living security system and as a challenge for young dragons honing their combat skills.

In addition to imported creatures, Argonnessen has a native population of dinosaurs, dire animals, and lesser dragons. Many lords of the Vast or of the more "civilized" Light of Siberys have packs of faithful hunting wyverns; some even equip their wyverns with barding and magic equipment.

When building an encounter list for Argonnessen, DMs should keep the local climate in mind . . . but beyond that, almost any creature could find a home in Argonnessen. Dragons are unlikely to introduce powerful, highly intelligent creatures that could pose a threat to draconic dominance of Argonnessen. Other than that, the sky's the limit.

ENVIRONMENT

Argonnessen has a wide range of climates, from the temperate jungles and deserts of the north to the bitter tundra of the southern peninsula. Much of this variety is natural, but a few areas possess climate that is quite unnatural. Argonnessen has suffered its own share of magical catastrophes. The battles of the Age of Demons tore at reality, and incursions from Fernia and Risia have left permanent scars on the land. The Fang Crater is always filled with blistering heat, while the ice sheet around the base of Silverclaw Peak is bordered by steaming jungle. These effects mean that it is possible to find monsters tied to a specific environment far from where one might expect. Still, these effects are far more stable than in Xen'drik and the Mournland.

When traveling across Argonnessen, always remember that it's a land of dragons. Nondragons exist in the interior, but even they aren't encouraged to travel, and those who do so on the business of a dragon are usually provided with a wyvern mount. It is largely a land without roads and without inns, shops, Jorasco healing houses, or any of the other amenities adventurers grow used to.

BIG RISKS, BIG REWARDS

Adventures in Argonnessen should be the stuff of song and story. Six heroes facing an army of dragons. The Daughter of Khyber rising from her prison, shattering the mystic wards as she climbs. The discovery and claiming of a sword wielded in a battle at the dawn of time. As a DM, play to this. Consider the scope of history, and ways to give an encounter more weight.

This chapter presents a few new items with which to reward adventure groups, but feel free to expand this list to appeal to a specific group of players. Some ideas follow.

Secret Knowledge: Whenever a new supplement makes its way into the game, a Dungeon Master has to decide how to integrate new spells and feats. Does a sorcerer suddenly have access to all the spells in *Complete Arcane*? Or do those spells have to be introduced into the campaign? Argonnessen is an obvious place to introduce material from *Dragon Magic* or *Draconomicon*, but it could just as easily be the source of spells from *Spell Compendium* or *Player's Handbook II*. The dragons of Argonnessen have forgotten more about magic than any other mortal creature has ever known; few spells are outside their reach.

The same holds true for feats or even classes. Perhaps the dragons of the Light of Siberys were the first to perfect the Tiger Claw$^{\text{ToB}}$ discipline. At this point in history, it could be that no living nondragon knows this art . . . and that to progress along this path, a PC would have to find a draconic mentor and convince the master of his worth as a student.

Artifacts: The giants of Xen'drik might be one of the primary sources of artifacts, but don't forget that the dragons taught the giants. Furthermore, the dragons have spent millennia collecting the artifacts of the Overlords of the Age of Demons, who were truly the most powerful beings seen on Eberron. If a DM wants to add artifacts into the game, Argonnessen is a logical place. In addition to items, be sure to consider the concept of artifact spells (found in *Secrets of Xen'drik*). Dragons have certainly developed epic spells. A wizard exploring Xen'drik might even find the true Aureon's spellshard (or at least Ourelonastrix's spellshard), containing the final creations of the dragon who might have been the first Sovereign of magic.

Glory: Argonnessen is big. It's ancient. A thousand legends are tied to the dragons, and a thousand more to their mysterious homeland. Are there really fiends buried beneath every rock? Is Aureon's true shadow hidden in the Pit of Five Sorrows? Is Tiamat stirring once more, and if so, are the adventurers the only ones who can return her to her rest?

DRAGON HOARDS

Why do the dragons of Argonnessen have hoards? Where do their hoards come from? The classic dragon burns a king out of his hall and lays claim to his trove of treasure. But Argonnessen is a land of dragons, and always has been. So where does this treasure come from, and what purpose does it serve?

For the dragons of Argonnessen, a hoard isn't simply a source of pleasure and satisfaction; it is a duty. During the Age of Demons, the Overlords and their fiendish minions established citadels across Argonnessen and stocked them with powerful magic items and artifacts. In the wake of the war, the dragons found themselves in possession of much of this treasure. Many powerful artifacts couldn't be destroyed. Even with lesser items, the dragons often refused to destroy tools they could potentially use. And so the treasures of the demons were divided up among the dragon heroes of the war. It wasn't a gift, it was a charge: These artifacts must never be wielded by those who would abuse their power. Although this was a great responsibility, it was also a status symbol, a sign of respect. In emulation, lesser dragons began to gather lesser treasures, as well as coins and jewels they found pleasing to the eye. As generations passed, the collection of such items became both a hobby and a source of status. When the dragons returned from Xen'drik, they brought treasures of the giants with them, and a number developed a connoisseur's eye for such baubles. The centerpiece of any hoard was the ancient treasures to be guarded, the heirlooms of a dragon's line. Collection itself became a source of pleasure, and one that served to mitigate the frustration of those who have no artifacts to guard.

Two elements of this situation affect explorers and adventurers. First, the hoards in Argonnessen contain artifacts and magic items designed to be used by rakshasas and other Medium fiends—weapons, armor, and jewelry that an explorer could take. The other aspect is that these items have a history and a role in draconic culture. Elders leave clear plans for who will assume guardianship of a relic after the keeper dies. As such, adventurers who kill a dragon and plunder his trove could be surprised when his heirs track them down to collect their legacies. A true hero who earns the respect of a dragon might be granted the right to guard the artifact on behalf of Argonnessen. On the other hand, thieves could find a powerful item far more trouble than a lesser one.

NONDRAGONS IN ARGONNESSEN

One common myth is that only dragons live in Argonnessen. It's an established fact that explorers who venture into the land don't return. Even the Serens don't travel beyond Totem Beach unless summoned by their dragon lords. Many claim that Argonnessen is a land of dragons and only dragons.

In truth, lots of nondragons inhabit Argonnessen, drawn from a wide array of races and cultures. From goblinoids and humans to orcs and yuan-ti, Argonnessen has one of the most racially diverse populations on Eberron.

So where did these creatures come from? And what is their relationship with the dragons?

When the Age of Giants was in its infancy, dragons spread out across the world. Some followed the path of conquest, while others served as mentors to the lesser races. After the dragons were recalled to Argonnessen, they had to abandon their dominions. More than a few refused to leave empty-handed. Some of their subjects came willingly, most notably the stone giants brought across from Xen'drik; to this day, these giants are loyal servants of Argonnessen. Others were brought across as slaves, and settled in the Vast or on Seren.

Over the course of millennia, dragons have continued to "import" nondragons into Argonnessen. This has been done in the name of research, in accordance with the Prophecy, to revitalize failing communities, or simply to provide sport for the dominion lords of the Vast. On rare occasions, refugees have been given shelter in Argonnessen—notably the yuan-ti of Sarlona (although such shelter was revoked after the destruction of Io'vakas; see page 41 for information about this event).

Despite the range of races represented on Argonnessen, the land is not a welcoming place for nondragons. The bulk of the natives of Xen'drik are found in the Vast, where they live at the whim of the dominion lords. Populations are strictly controlled, and they are little more than a living extension of the dragon's hoard. The rebels who flee into the wilds are hunted for sport. Pockets of guerrillas have managed to survive; a number of persecuted yuan-ti and other nondragons allied with the Talons of Tiamat have taken refuge in ruins and underground warrens. But it is a dangerous life—dragon consider nondragons of little consequence and will snuff out lives without a second thought.

THE ORBS OF DRAGONKIND

It's said that Tiamat created the *Orbs of Dragonkind*, and that these artifacts allow the bearer to channel her power to bind dragons to his will. Whatever the truth of this legend, these artifacts are despised and prized by the dragons of Argonnessen, who are determined to keep them out of the hands of both mortal and demon. It is believed that seven of the orbs are currently held in hoards in Argonnessen; the remaining are currently unaccounted for. The appearance of an orb would cause a stir among the dragons—and the theft of an orb would be sure to invite vengeance.

Beyond the Vast, some nondragons have been taken in as servants by flights of the Thousand, the dragon heartland. Others have found a place within the outward-looking Tapestry, assisting researchers or preparing to serve as agents of the Chamber in the world belong. The largest concentration of free humans is in the city of Io'lokar (page 40). Nonetheless, even beyond the Vast, nondragons have no rights, and most dragons dislike having other creatures encroach on their territory without an invitation. A human traveling in Argonnessen should have a good explanation for his presence—otherwise, he could quickly become a meal.

POWERS THAT BE

Dragons are solitary creatures for the most part. Even among the Thousand, each dragon establishes his own lair within the dominion of his flight. Few dragons choose to spend their lives in the constant company of other dragons.

Nonetheless, the dragons of Argonnessen are intelligent beings that have had hundreds of thousands of years to develop customs and traditions. Dragons might maintain their own lairs and live solitary lives, but groups do exist in Argonnessen, organizations that give structure to draconic life.

THE CONCLAVE

When the dragons first gathered to plot their rebellion in the Age of Demons, it was the eldest among them who laid out their plans. This tradition continues to the present day. For a dragon, age is power, and the oldest of the dragons direct the destiny of their kind. It was the Conclave that brought an end to the age of draconic expansion, ordered the destruction of Xen'drik, and authorized the Chamber to operate in distant lands. Aside from their own personal power as great wyrms, the members of the Conclave command the militant Light of Siberys, and few dare challenge their rulings.

Members of the Conclave come from all territories of Argonnessen. Each flight or dominion sends a single great wyrm to represent its interests; younger dragons have no voice in the Conclave. In theory, color plays no role. In practice, charisma and sheer might gives the gold, silver, bronze, and red dragons greater influence than others. The council meets at the Great Aerie of the Thousand once every decade, with emergency sessions called as necessary. In these meetings (which can last weeks or even months), dragons discuss recent developments in the Prophecy, the actions of rogues and the Lords of Dust, and any news sent in by spies or dragon guardians. Issues are resolved through debate; ultimately a vote settles any disputes. Voting involves a major artifact, the *Orb of*

WHAT KEEPS THE DRAGONS IN THE SHADOWS?

Over fifty thousand dragons roam Argonnessen. Few creatures on Eberron can stand up to any great wyrm, let alone a hidecarved dragon of the Light of Siberys. Dragons have physical might and mystical power. Why don't they solve all the world's problems? Why didn't they fight the daelkyr? Why don't they defeat the Dreaming Dark?

A number of reasons exist. The first is basic selfishness. The vast majority of the dragons are concerned only about matters that threaten the dragons. At this point in time, the Dreaming Dark doesn't threaten Argonnessen. Could the dragons devastate Riedra? Assuredly. But the Dreaming Dark would retaliate . . . and even dragons dream. It would be a vicious, dangerous fight. Why bother when that force merely oppresses some irrelevant humanoids?

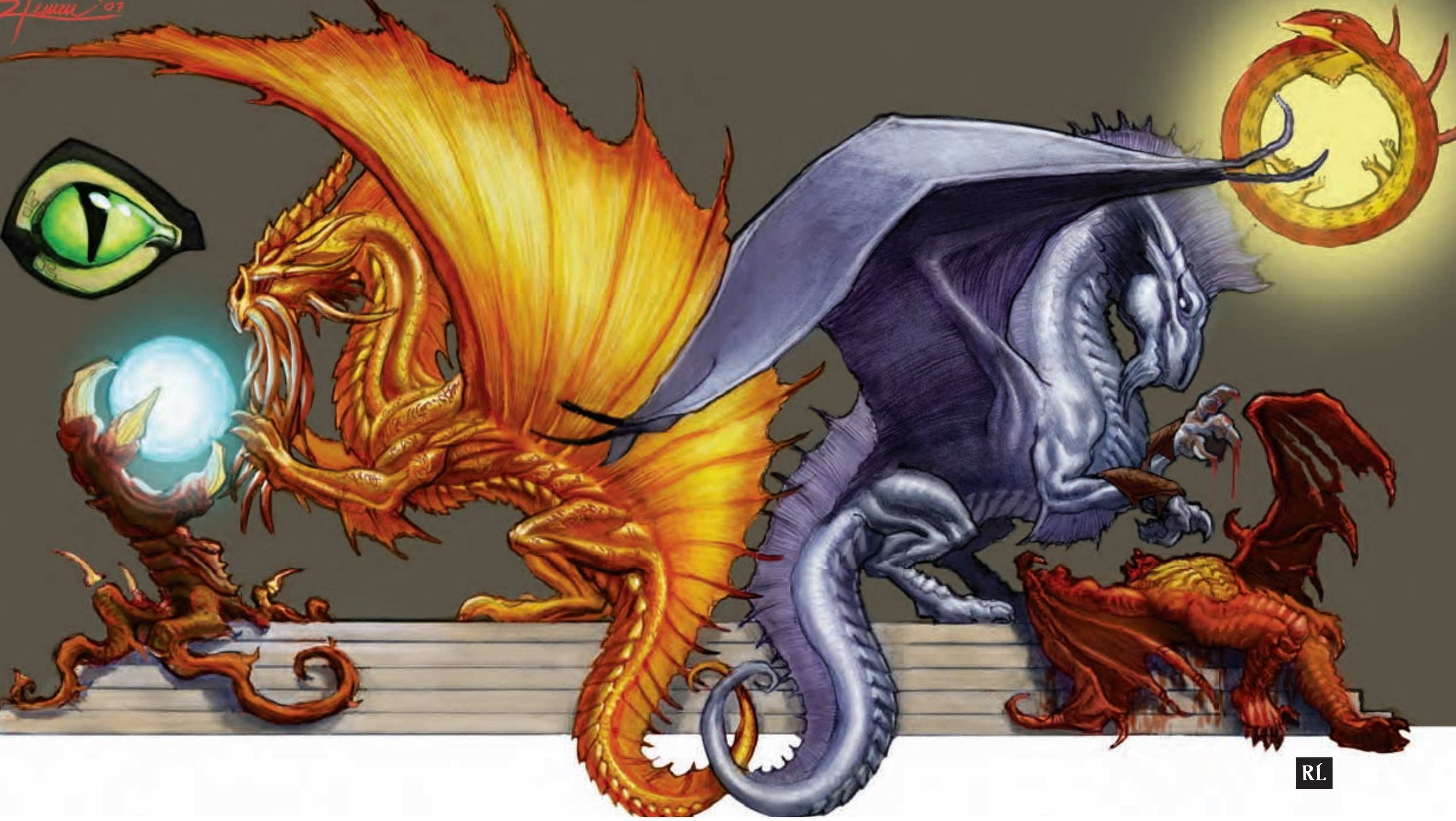
The same is true of the Lords of Dust. The dragons spar with the Lords of Dust, each engaging in gambits to influence the outcome of the Prophecy. But unless the Lords of Dust find a way to release a rajah, they pose little threat to Argonnessen itself. On the other hand, the immortal members of the Council of Ashtakala certainly have enough power to kill a significant number of dragons if the Chamber commenced open warfare. There might come a time when they decide such a war is necessary. Now's not that time.

Another factor is the Prophecy. In the past, the dragons as a whole actively sought not to influence the Prophecy. At present, some still try to manipulate it. Even so, they are looking at results that could be decades in the future. So an action the dragons take—or one they don't—might not reflect their interest in the current event, but rather the chain of events it sets in motion.

Yet another factor is Tiamat. When dragons become too active in the world, the Daughter of Khyber strains against her bonds. She is a far greater danger to the dragons than the daelkyr.

One final factor to consider: Dragons don't do things by half measure, and they don't bother with fine distinctions. When the dragons saved the world by stopping the giants of Xen'drik from unleashing epic magic, they destroyed a continent. The conflict brought death and destruction to giants, elves, drow, and many others. When the dragons discovered a group of yuan-ti practicing forbidden arts in Io'vakas, they razed the city and killed nearly the entire population. To this day, they hunt yuan-ti along the length and breadth of Argonnessen, regardless of the serpent people's alignment or intentions. If the dragons chose to "help" against the Dreaming Dark, they might decide that eliminating all humans worldwide was the best approach. That would certainly solve the problem . . . for the dragons.

Dragons don't have the interests of nondragons at heart. They protect only their own. For now, the fate of the world is in the hands of the player characters. And they should be thankful for that.



The Eyes of Chronepsis and the Light of Siberys guide and protect Argonnessen

Ourelonastrix. This vast crystal sphere is set into the floor of the Aerie's council chamber. Each member of the Conclave sends a vote as a pulse of magical energy—an action that uses a 0-level arcane spell slot, but does not require the use of a specific spell—and the orb shows the results. The orb evaluates the mind of each voter, and indicates if a voter is under the influence of magical or psionic coercion.

Dragons must physically attend the Conclave to vote. Those who do not wish to vote can take part in debates through arcane proxy.

To date, no nondragon has ever been allowed to attend a session of the Conclave. Nondragon servants—mostly stone giants and trusted children of Io'lokar—maintain the Great Aerie, but the meetings of the Conclave are attended only by dragons and their colossal iron golem sentinels. Any nondragon found to have spied on the Conclave without permission faces fearsome punishment.

To the casual observer, the Conclave appears to have little impact on the daily lives of the dragons. Still, the Conclave decides the direction of the dragons as a race. A decision made at any of the rare and momentous Conclave gatherings can change the shape of Eberron. It is in Conclave that the dragons could decide to destroy the dragonmarked houses, drive the Inspired from power, or bring a halt to the activities of the Chamber.

THE EYES OF CHRONEPSIS

No dragon can escape the baleful gaze of the Eyes of Chronepsis. The Eyes are a force of roughly one hundred fifty elder dragons, hand-picked by the Conclave of Argonnessen. Once chosen, they answer only to each other and the dragon deity Chronepsis; not even the Conclave can command an Eye of Chronepsis.

Established in the wake of Aureon's Folly, the Eyes of Chronepsis hold the power of life and death over all dragons. They act as both judge and executioner in any case where a dragon threatens the stability of Argonnessen or of the draconic Prophecy. They also monitor those dragons that live beyond Argonnessen and eliminate any who place Argonnessen at risk. The presence of the Eyes is the primary reason rogues keep a low profile. The Eyes don't care how dragons treat the lesser races, but a dragon whose actions are too obvious and disruptive could draw unwanted attention to Argonnessen. In theory, the Eyes prevent dragons from sharing knowledge with the lesser races. The example of Vvaraak, however, shows that either it is possible to evade the Eyes, or that the Eyes tacitly approved of her actions.

The Eyes of Chronepsis closely track the draconic Prophecy. Prior to the formation of the Chamber, it was the Eyes who battled the Lords of Dust to prevent the fiends from manipulating the Prophecy. However, unlike the Chamber, the Eyes have always been dedicated to observing the Prophecy without pushing it in any particular direction. If the rakshasas were trying to force a particular outcome, they'd act—but if that same outcome came about naturally, they'd stand aside. Even when they did act, the Eyes sought only to protect the Prophecy; it is not their mission to take the battle to the Lords of Dust or to fight the other forces of evil in Eberron. They watch. They gather information. They punish dragons who threaten the homeland. And they protect the Prophecy itself. All else is extraneous.

The appearance of the dragonmarks was a shock to the Eyes of Chronepsis. In the wake of this event, they agreed to allow the dragons of the Chamber to take a more active role in the wider world, and to observe the impact on the Prophecy. To date, they have been content to watch—but at any time, the Eyes of Chronepsis could demand an end to the activities of the Chamber.

The Eyes of Chronepsis watch the watchers—they are a force that even dragons fear. However, they act only in truly dire circumstances. The actions of a rogue dragon can't simply threaten Khorvaire; a threat to Argonnessen must exist. Although the Eyes of Chronepsis might help adventurers by eliminating a dangerous dragon, they could also be a deadly foe. A dragon providing vital aid—as Vvaraak did during the daelkyr incursion—could be targeted by the Eyes. Alternatively, the Eyes could strike against an organization that threatens the Prophecy—such as a dragonmarked house.

All of the Eyes of Chronepsis are wyrms or great wyrms, many with class levels. Some specialize in scrying and divination, while others are trained in battle. One of the best-known figures among the Eyes is the Lightkeeper Silaesteron (LN male great wyrm gold dragon hidecarved dragon^{Dr} 12), who speaks for the Eyes when the Conclave gathers.

THE LIGHT OF SIBERYS

A scholar who researches the elf–dragon wars, or who manages to find records of the conflict that destroyed Xen'drik, cannot help noticing that the dragons fought as a disciplined force . . . as an army, not merely a band of individuals. This break with draconic isolation was the work of the Light of Siberys, a name used both for a geographic region in Argonnessen and for the dragons who live there. These soldiers have stood ready since the end of the Age of Demons. They guard the prisons of the Overlords. They maintain the borders of Argonnessen itself. And when the time comes for war, they organize the other dragons into a united force, bringing tactics and discipline to the battle.

Little truly threatens Argonnessen, but the Light of Siberys has faced plenty of challenges. The Soldiers of the Light carry out periodic, limited attacks on Aerenal—perhaps reconnaissance, perhaps training exercises, always short of full-scale invasion. The Light pursues the Talons of Tiamat, an activity that has become far more frequent of late. These militants have dealt with a number of other threats to Argonnessen that the people of the wider world have never even heard of, including planar incursions from both Fernia and Risia. The Light of Siberys maintains an order of impartial mediators, whom other dragons can call on to attempt to resolve disputes. Finally, it is the Light of Siberys that patrols the longest border of Argonnessen—anyone who passes across Totem Beach must face the Soldiers of the Light.

Although dragons of the Light of Siberys have mastered fight operations in large numbers, under normal circumstances they operate in squads of two to five, with the oldest dragon serving as squad leader. Dragons of all colors and all ages serve in the Light; because of their training, many have class levels. In addition to the standard classes, the following choices are all good options for members of the Light of Siberys: hidecarved dragon, sacred warder of Bahamut (*Draconomicon*), legendary leader, war weaver (*Tome of Battle*), and marshal (*Miniatures Handbook*).

Within the Light of Siberys, rank is based on age and service; it is possible for a dragon to be placed in command of an older comrade, if he has superior military skills. However, this rank holds no significance outside the Light of Siberys. The Conclave can grant the Light authority to act in its name; otherwise, the dragons of the Light hold no special jurisdiction over other dragons.

THE CHAMBER

The Conclave and the Eyes of Chronepsis both have serious doubts about the actions of the Chamber, and whether the cabal should be allowed to continue its work abroad. The surviving elders of the Chamber—the dragons who founded the movement—are now great wyrms. While the younger dragons explore the world, their elders fight to keep their order alive. The elder dragons of the Chamber include accomplished prophets and loredrakes, and their insights into the Prophecy have helped to mollify the great powers of Argonnessen. But it is an ongoing struggle, with no rest for the wise.

RANK IN THE LIGHT OF SIBERYS

Since every member of the Light of Siberys is a living siege engine, the structure of the Light is different from that of a human army. A squad of five dragons is a significant force; something as great as a full battalion is rarely required. Nonetheless, the Light has a hierarchy in place to manage engagements involving hundreds or even thousands of dragons.

If you are using *Heroes of Battle*, these are the commander ratings for the Light of Siberys.

0	Soldier of Siberys
1	Lantern of Siberys
2	Guiding Light of Siberys
3	Beacon of Siberys
4	Radiance
5	Radiant Flame
6	Glorious Flame
7	Eternal Flame

Religion

The draconic faith acknowledges three divine forces: the Progenitors, the Dragon Gods, and the Sovereigns. The faith is called Thir, Draconic for "Three"; this refers both to the three Progenitors and to the three ranks of divinity.

The names of the Progenitors are known in almost every culture. Siberys, the Dragon Above, source of magic and father of the dragons. Khyber, the Dragon Below, father of fiends and corruptor of dragons. And Eberron, the world itself, mother of all that is natural. The dragons believe that the Progenitors spawned all creation. All dragons respect the Progenitors as the source of reality, but few worship them directly. Siberys is dead, and Eberron and Khyber are simply too vast to hear the prayers of a single dragon. A dragon who reveres Eberron above all others becomes a druid, while one beholden to Khyber venerates in secret, away from the harsh Eyes of Chronepsis.

Most dragons direct their prayers to less remote deities—Io, Aasterinian, Astilabor, Bahamut, Chronepsis, Falazure, Garyx, Hlal, Lendys, Tamara, and Tiamat. Each of these deities is represented by a constellation in the night sky, and with the exception of Tiamat, it is believed that the Dragon Gods watch the world from a realm that stands beyond the thirteen . . . a place that cannot be reached by any mortal magic.

According to Thir, the Dragon Gods influence the affairs of dragons, but they have no time for lesser creatures. Humans, dwarves, and elves would sully the Dragon Gods with their prayers. Watching over lesser creatures is the role of the Sovereigns. The dragon priests claim that dragons who embody primal concepts in life ascend to become Sovereigns in death. Instead of falling to Dolurrh, the spirit of an ascended dragon rises up, taking the place of one of the existing Sovereigns. The former Sovereign spirit then ascends farther, abandoning the thirteen planes and finding its final reward in the higher realm of the Dragon Gods. The common doctrine holds that there can be only fifteen ascended Sovereign spirits at one time, but many rogue dragons have challenged this theory and sought to find their own paths to ascension.

It is an easy matter to map the legends of the ascended dragons to the myths of the Sovereign Host and the Dark Six. A critical difference is that the dragons don't separate the two. Dulazurak is the archetype of the dishonorable warrior, but to the dragons, that's still a Sovereign archetype and a valid path to immortality. The forces that the people of Khorvaire separate as Nine and Six are a single host in the eyes of the dragons; good or evil, they are all the Sovereigns who watch over the lesser beings.

The central doctrine of Thir is simple enough. The Progenitors created the world, and the draconic Prophecy is the manifestation of their will and their plan for creation; it shifts and twists about because Khyber and Eberron desire such different things. Eventually, the draconic Prophecy will run its course, and this creation will come to an end. A new set of Progenitors will be chosen from among the Dragon Gods . . . and the most worthy of the ascended Sovereigns will in turn rise to become the Dragon Gods of the next creation. A new Prophecy will unfold, and the cycle will begin once more.

Bear in mind that the faith of the dragons is just that. No absolute proof supports their beliefs any more than those of any other religion. Perhaps dragons can ascend after death; perhaps this is simply myth, and *commune* and similar spells just draw on the faith of the dragons to generate responses. Most humans find the dragons' view of the Sovereigns to be incredibly arrogant—the beings that other creatures see as gods are ascended dragons tasked with the tedious chore of caring for nondragons.

The dragons guard their faith as if it were a precious jewel. Some students of draconic lore claim that, behind their disdain for the prayers of lesser creatures, another rationale exists. The dragons are actually afraid that if the lesser creatures turned to the worship of the true deities, they might be judged worthy of ascension . . . ultimately stealing the dragons' sole claim to the heavens.

Although dragon priests and clerics are respected for their piety, religion is personal for dragons. Few public rituals or grand holidays exist. Every dragon finds his own path to faith. Many dragons take this a step farther, pursuing one of the Sovereign archetypes in the hope of ascending after death.

Chronepsis in Eberron

Chronepsis judges the souls of dragons after death; in Eberron, it is believed that Chronepsis decides if a dragon soul will fall into Dolurrh or ascend along the Sovereign paths. However, Chronepsis has another role that is even more important. He is the Lord of Fate and Prophecy. The draconic Prophecy is the will of the Progenitors, but many dragons believe that Chronepsis chooses how it will be revealed. An ongoing philosophical debate centers on the question of whether Chronepsis expects dragons to follow the path fate lays before them—the traditional view—or whether the Prophecy exists to help mortals choose their own destinies.

Chronepsis looks harshly on any magic that allows a dragon to escape his judgment, from *raise dead* to the undead existence of the dracolich. Dragon priests usually cast an *augury* before raising the dead; this action informs the caster whether the god of fate approves of this action. No automatic consequences for raising a creature against the will of Chronepsis exist; after all, the deity might not actually exist. However, a DM could choose to inflict misfortune on a dragon raised against the will of destiny. Certainly, the Eyes of Chronepsis would seek to slay the transgressor and return him to his judgment.

Occasionally, a dragon claims to be a true avatar of a Sovereign; one example of this is a dracolich that inhabits the Lair of the Keeper in the Demon Wastes (*ECS* 162). Regardless of the truth of this, it could be the source of many of the myths involving the Sovereigns. Such an "avatar" might have levels in the dragon ascendant prestige class (*Dr* 90) or additional powers through celestial channeling. It's up to the DM to decide if these powers actually come from the Sovereign, or some lesser outsider playing games with the world.

SOVEREIGN ARCHETYPES

Many dragons who follow the Thir faith seek to emulate one of the Sovereigns. By embodying a Sovereign in life, a dragon hopes to ascend and assume this role after death.

Pursuing a Sovereign archetype is a lifelong goal, and it is reflected in a dragon's behavior and outlook on life. Dragons are still individuals; one loredrake might be dry and serious, while another is cheerfully manic. But both are utterly dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge. As such, the choice of a Sovereign archetype should provide a DM with a thumbnail sketch of a dragon's motivations and personality.

All true dragons have the potential to use arcane magic. Most have the ability to select spells from the cleric spell list and certain domains. This variant rule instead provides a dragon with a special ability based on the Sovereign archetype it chooses to follow. This special ability replaces the optional spell selection abilities a dragon normally possesses; as such, a silver dragon that adopts the child of Eberron archetype can no longer cast cleric spells or those from the Air, Good, Law, and Sun domains. Those wholly unable to cast cleric spells (black, green, and white) lose nothing when they adopt a Sovereign archetype.

Dragons don't have to follow archetypes. Indeed, many of the archetypes require training and discipline. If the DM uses this rule, he must decide if dragons that do not have an archetype can gain access to cleric spells as described in the *Monster Manual,* or if such dragons are limited to standard arcane magic.

CHILD OF EBERRON

All natural life sprang from the progenitor dragon Eberron, and the child of Eberron honors the Great Mother and defends her works. Many draconic prophets are children of Eberron, since the Prophecy appears in soil and stone. Others are guardians, protecting the land. And a few—such as Vvaraak—become allies of the lesser creatures, teaching nondragons the secrets of nature.

This archetype embodies two paths to ascension. One follows nature's bounty, which humans would associate with Arawai. Other children of Eberron embrace nature's fury, the role of the Devourer. These dragons can be fearsome ravagers, but they can also be stalwart guardians, bringing the full force of nature to bear against fiends and aberrations.

Sovereigns: Arawai and the Devourer.

Benefit: A child of Eberron learns to speak Druidic without spending skill points. Survival is added to the list of class skills. A child of Eberron can cast spells from the druid spell list as arcane spells.

FLAME OF THE FORGE

Many people think of dragons as lazy creatures sleeping atop hoards of stolen treasure. But industrious innovators exist among the dragons of Eberron. Using *disintegrate, fabricate*, and the pure power of dragonfire, flames of the forge have crafted many wonders and mighty artifacts. From the Pit of Five Sorrows to the Great Aerie of Argonnessen, the work of the forge wyrms can be seen across Argonnessen.

Many flames of the forge rely on construct assistants or nondragon companions. However, some of the most brilliant forge wyrms work in absolute solitude, using magic to accomplish their work.

Sovereign: Onatar.

Benefit: Craft and Use Magic Device are added to the list of class skills. The dragon's effective caster level is increased by two for the purpose of creating magic items. When the dragon can cast arcane spells of the appropriate level, the following bonus spells are added to his spells known or spellbook for that class: 0—*mage hand, mending;* 1st—*Tenser's floating disk, magecraft, unseen servant;* 2nd—*unseen crafter*^{RE}; 5th—*fabricate, permanency;* 8th—*true creation.* Finally, when the dragon reaches a caster level of 9th or higher, he gains the retain essence class feature of the artificer (*ECS* 32).

FORTUNE'S FANG

These dragons prefer travel to solitude, and enjoy moving among other creatures, whether they are dealing with dragons or mingling with humanity. Many serve as spies within the humanoid nations, but others prefer the path of the minstrel. Some simply wander across Argonnessen, enjoying the many wonders of their homeland.

Sovereign: Olladra.

Benefit: Bluff and Disguise are added to the list of class skills. A fortune's fang can cast cleric spells and spells from the Feast, Luck, and Trickery domains as arcane spells.

GUIDE OF THE WEAK

The guide of the weak acts as a shepherd of the lesser creatures, moving among them and shaping their cultures. Although some are gentle beings who simply wish to help others, a guide can also be a ruthless tyrant who believes that imposing harsh order on his subjects is best for them.

Sovereign: Boldrei.

Benefit: Diplomacy and Intimidate are added to the list of class skills. A guide of the weak can cast cleric spells and spells from the Community and Protection domains as arcane spells.

LIGHTKEEPER

As Siberys fought Khyber, the lightkeeper stands against Khyber's offspring and other forces that threaten Eberron. Guardians who watch over the resting places of fiends often follow this path. Lightkeepers place great value on personal honor and sacrifice, and dragons following this path tend toward lawful alignments.

Sovereign: Dol Arrah.

Benefit: A lightkeeper has a divine aura as a cleric of her caster level. The dragon can take the Extra Turning feat even if she does not meet the prerequisites; this allows her to turn or rebuke undead four times per day as a cleric of her caster level. A lightkeeper can cast cleric spells and spells from the Glory^SC, Law, Sun, and War domains as arcane spells.

LOREDRAKE

Magic flows through every dragon's blood. The loredrake devotes her life to harnessing this power and understanding the mysteries of magic. The most accomplished priests of the Dragon Gods and students of the draconic Prophecy are typically loredrakes, and it is the dragons of this path that uncovered the greatest mysteries of arcane magic. Most dragons have great respect for loredrakes, but not all loredrakes are noble creatures. Darkness abides in magic along with light, and a loredrake must decide whether he answers the call of the Shadow.

Sovereigns: Aureon, The Shadow.

Benefit: Spellcraft is added to the list of class skills. Once the dragon has the ability to cast spells, his effective sorcerer level is increased by two. For example, an adult gold loredrake cast spells as a 9th-level sorcerer. In exchange, the dragon's racial Hit Dice are reduced to d10s.

MASTER OF THE HOARD

Although known for their greed, these dragons are shrewd negotiators and students of history. The hoarders play a critical role in the Chamber, because they have the strongest grasp of economic forces and their influence over human lives.

Some take this one step farther, treating life and death as simple negotiations and seeking to collect actual souls in emulation of the Keeper (a task that can be accomplished using the Keeper's fang weapons and other binding magics). A few go so far as to become dracoliches, but unless this is sanctioned by the Eyes of Chronepsis—a rare occurrence indeed—the dragon could be hunted down and destroyed.

Sovereigns: Kol Korran, The Keeper.

Benefit: Appraise, Diplomacy, and Sense Motive are added to the list of class skills. A master of the hoard can cast cleric spells and spells from the Charm, Commerce, and Travel domains as arcane spells.

PASSION'S FLAME

Passion, madness, and truth—all are threads on the same skein. The dragons that follow this path might be great artists or poets. They might gain insights into the Prophecy that even the wisest loredrake cannot see. But passion can lead to fury, and when a dragon falls into a blind rage she poses a deadly threat to any creature that crosses her path.

Sovereign: The Fury.

Benefit: Perform is added to the list of class skills. A passion's flame can enter a rage a number of times per day equal to a barbarian of her caster level, although she doesn't gain access to the greater rage, tireless rage, or mighty rage features. A passion's flame can cast cleric spells and spells from the Madness and Passion domains as arcane spells.

STALKING WYRM

Part wyrm of war (see below), part child of Eberron, the stalker revels in the hunt and its own place in the natural world. Often encountered as ravagers searching for challenging prey, stalkers also serve as scouts in the armies of Argonnessen and as guardians of the wilds.

Sovereign: Balinor.

Benefit: Hide, Move Silently, and Survival are class skills. A stalking wyrm receives Track as a bonus feat, and can cast spells from the Air, Animal, and Earth domains as arcane spells. Finally, a stalking wyrm gains favored enemies as if he was a ranger of a level equal to his sorcerer caster level.

WYRM OF WAR

What combatant can match the deadly power of the dragon? Wyrms of war are living engines of destruction, capable of scattering armies with ease. The wyrm of war devotes his existence to honing his martial prowess, becoming the ultimate expression of battle.

Wyrms of war follow two paths. The pure warrior focuses solely on his martial strength and skill. The traitor's path encourages the use of deception and trickery in battle, wielding cunning as a weapon.

Sovereigns: Dol Dorn, the Mockery.

Benefit: A wyrm of war is proficient with all simple and martial weapons, and all armor (including shields). A wyrm of war receives a bonus feat for every 4 Hit Dice he possesses. He can select any fighter bonus feat, or any combat-related feat tied to draconic abilities (such as Wingover). He must meet the prerequisites for any feats.

A DM using *Tome of Battle* might instead give wyrms of war access to maneuvers and stances from the Tiger Claw discipline. Treat the dragon's sorcerer level as his initiator level when determining known and readied stances and maneuvers. To learn a maneuver or stance, a dragon must permanently sacrifice a sorcerer spell slot of the same level.

TRAVELER

No Sovereign archetype is associated with the Traveler. The dragons maintain that this role has its roots in all Sovereign archetypes. They believe that fortune, invention, magic, and war are all aspects of this force of change, and all paths can lead to ascension to this role.

TERRITORIES OF ARGONNESSEN

The continent of Argonnessen is divided into four informal territories. All areas fall under the rule of the Conclave, and the borders between them are open; a dragon of the Thousand can choose to settle in the Vast whenever he wishes. The true borders between the territories are cultural. Any dragon can settle in the Vast—but he must be prepared to live by its harsh rules.

Like Xen'drik, Argonnessen is a land that should bend to meet the needs of the story. Population figures give a general sense of the balance between nondragons and dragons. Even so, if a DM wants to add a city of ten thousand drow—the terminus of a secret pipeline running from Xen'drik across the Thunder Sea—nothing here prevents that.

THE THOUSAND

The Thousand Flights of Argonnessen—more commonly called the Thousand—is the heart of the dragon homeland. The great wyrms of the Thousand inhabit lairs hewn in the Age of Demons, and the cries of soaring dragons fill the air. Dragons have lived here for hundreds of thousands of years; the territory is replete with monuments to wise wyrms and legendary prophets, shrines to the deities of Thir, and wondrous locations created by the greatest flames of the forge. Crafted through pure magic by colossal artisans, these edifices tower over the landscape. Flying across the Thousand is a breathtaking experience, but one few nondragons ever experience; intruders find scant welcome in the land of the Thousand.

Dragon Population: 36,300.

Nondragon Population: 24,000 (35% human, 21% stone giant, 12% goblinoid, 9% orc, 8% dwarf, 6% gnome, 3% yuan-ti, 6% other).

INDUSTRIES

Some dragons of the Thousand trade with the dominion lords of the Vast, bartering for servants or treasures produced in that land. Flames of the forge wander the land, using their skills as architects, artificers, and engineers in exchange for treasures or useful information. Beyond this, the dragons are self-sufficient and self-involved; few real industries exist within the Thousand.

LIFE AND SOCIETY

The dragons of the Thousand are organized into extended family groups known as flights. Each flight controls a large domain within the Thousand. Every adult dragon has her own lair, which she shares with her mate and children. Some flights spread out across their domain, with miles between lairs. Others prefer to live in close proximity. These flights use epic-level magic to draw vast pillars of volcanic rock up from the earth, and then carve tunnels into these massive monoliths; a single pillar can be over a mile in height, serving as a home for up to a dozen dragons.

The flights of the Thousand are segregated by color. Many flights are surrounded by neighbors of the same color, creating patchwork patterns across the land. Most dragons of the Thousand prefer the company of their own kind. A few flights still cling to the antichromatic philosophies of Ourenilach, and some tension arises between white dragons and other flights, largely based around the argument that the less intelligent whites are little better than wyverns. Although this can result in heated debate, violence between dragons is rare. Formal duels or staged battles are accepted by some flights as a way of settling disputes, but most insist that members go to the Vast if they intend to do battle. Crimes between dragons are handled by the servants of Lendys, the Dragon God of Justice.

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

With a few exceptions, flights are ruled by the oldest dragon of the line. The clan might debate important issues, but the eldest has the final say. He decides who represents the flight in the Conclave of Argonnessen, and who guards the great treasures of the flight. He appoints the servant of Lendys, who investigates and punishes crimes committed by or against members of the flight; if necessary, a servant of Lendys can call upon the Eyes of Chronepsis for assistance. Beneath the elder, status within a flight is based on age and hoard.

The Conclave of Argonnessen is based in the Thousand. Dragons who speak in the Conclave are treated with great respect, regardless of their rank within a flight.

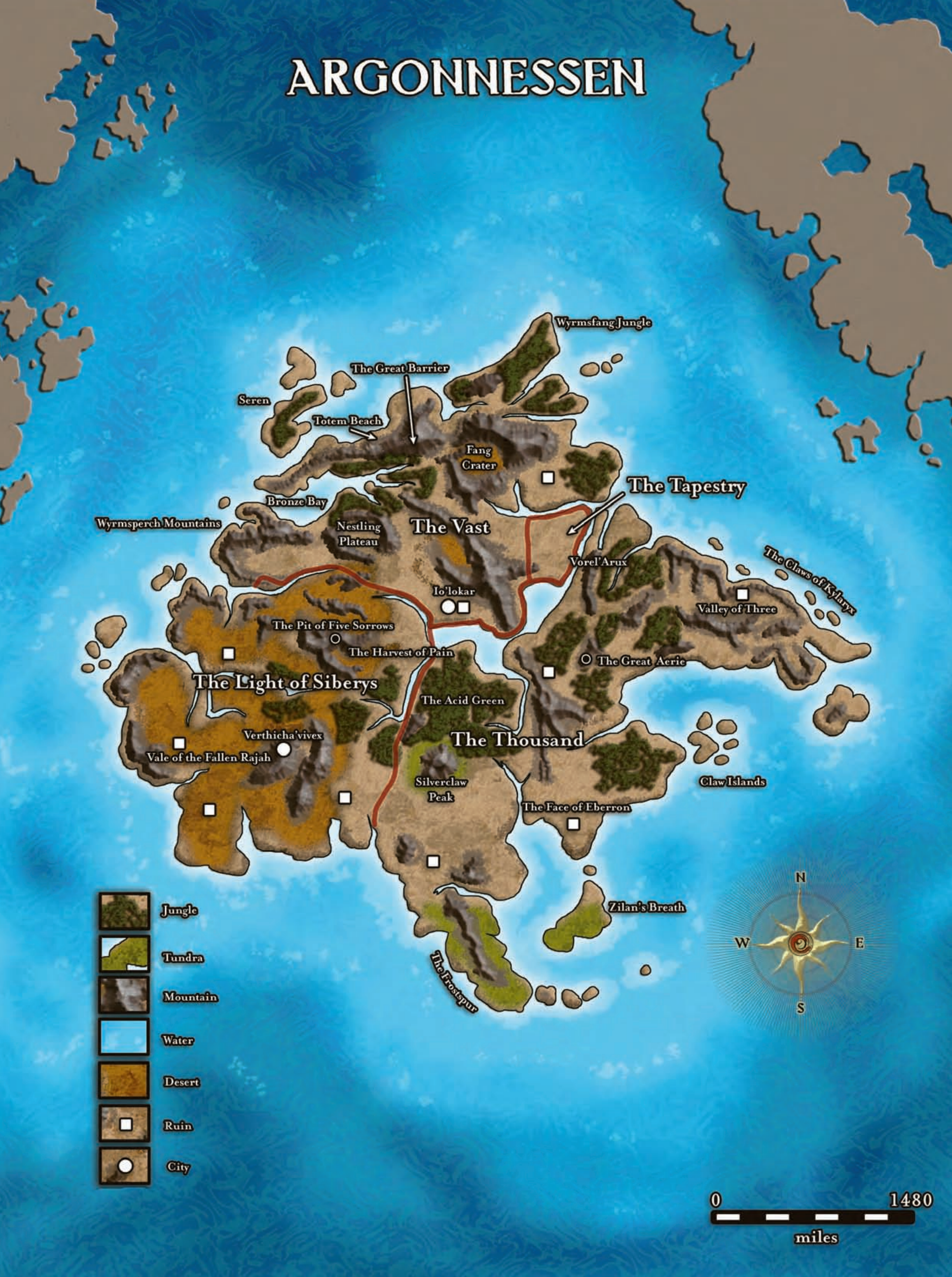
NONDRAGONS IN THE THOUSAND

Most nondragons in the Thousand are retainers attached to a particular flight of dragons. Some have served their flight for generations; others are recent acquisitions brought over from the Vast. Nondragon retainers perform tasks that are difficult or demeaning for dragons, and are often called upon to entertain their masters. As a result, most retainers are trained in some form of the Perform skill.

Many dragons dislike the presence of nondragons. Some of these dragons use constructs as retainers, typically favoring iron golems. Others feel that nondragons have no place in Argonnessen, and any such creature who crosses the domain of such a dragon is killed on sight. Nondragons have no rights in the Thousand. Killing a nondragon bearing the mark of a friendly flight is an insult to the owner, but many dragons consider the life of a single lesser creature to be trivial and pay this no mind.

IMPORTANT SITES

The Thousand is an enormous territory, filled with shrines, monuments, and magical locations. The land is studded with dragons' lairs, and a dragon is almost always visible in the sky. Here are just a few of the important sites of the Thousand.



ARGONNESSEN

Wyrmsfang Jungle
The Great Barrier
Seren
Totem Beach
Fang Crater
The Tapestry
Bronze Bay
Wyrmsperch Mountains
Nestling Plateau
The Vast
Vorel'Arux
The Claws of Kylaryx
Io'lokar
Valley of Three
The Pit of Five Sorrows
The Harvest of Pain
The Great Aerie
The Light of Siberys
The Acid Green
Verthicha'vivex
The Thousand
Vale of the Fallen Rajah
Silverclaw Peak
Claw Islands
The Face of Eberron
Zilan's Breath
The Frostspur
Jungle
Tundra
Mountain
Water
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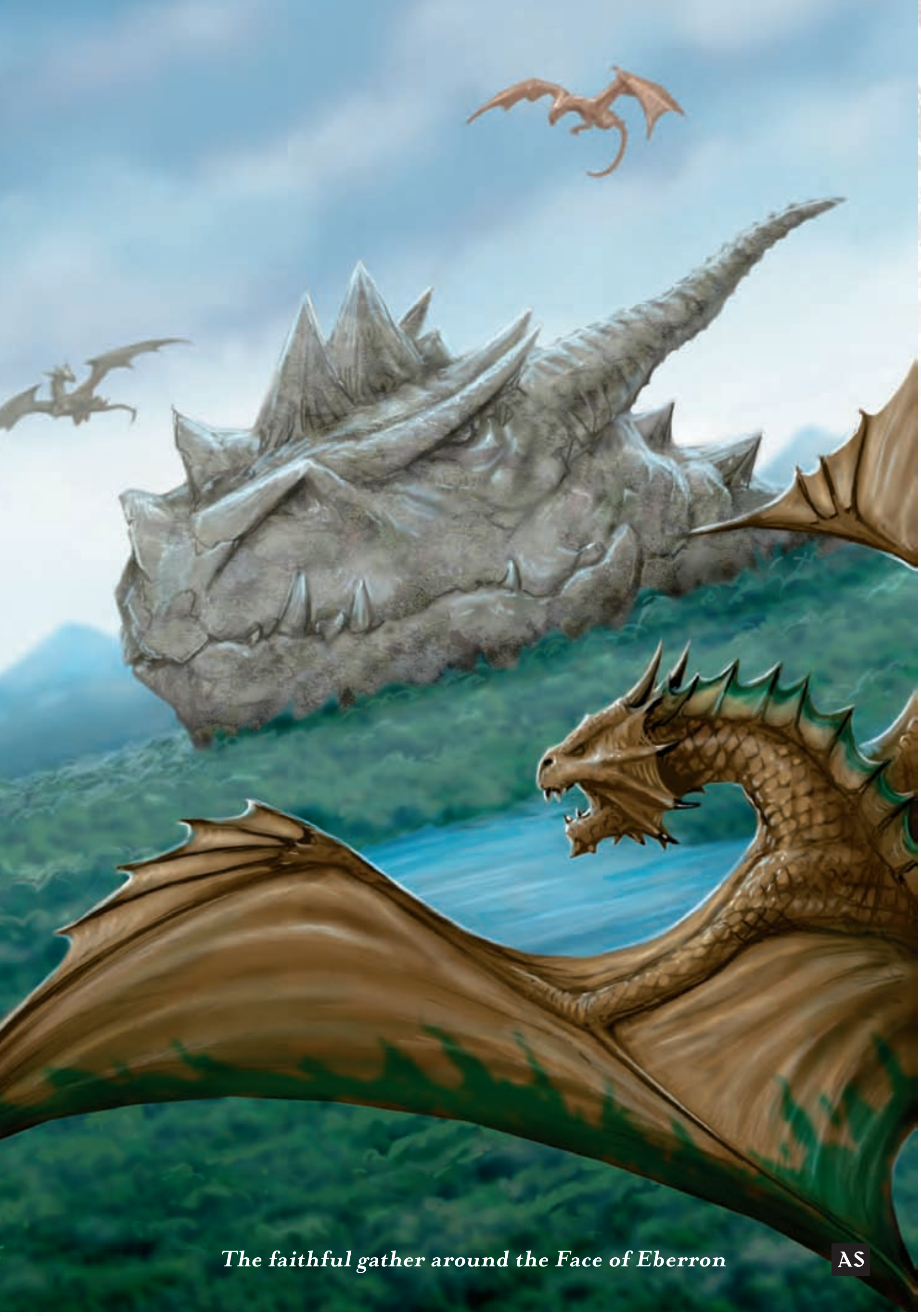

The faithful gather around the Face of Eberron

AS

The Face of Eberron: Near the southern shore of Argonnessen, a stone dragon's head rises up from the ground. It is an unfamiliar shape, not quite conforming to any kind of dragon seen on Eberron. More shocking, however, is its size. The head stretches three miles from snout to horns. If it is the work of a sculptor, it would have had to be carved from a mountain range. Many priests of Thir say it is the face of Eberron, and that when she speaks it will be heard across the world. The children of Eberron consider it a holy site, and young initiates come here to learn the mysteries of nature magic from older children.

The Great Aerie: An artificial mountain raised from the earth by dragon magic, this is the meeting place of the Conclave. Built to hold a thousand dragons, it towers over the landscape. Despite its imposing bulk, it is often empty of dragons, inhabited only by the stone giants and iron golems that maintain it as they wait for their masters to return.

The Valley of the Three: This is the primary shrine of the draconic religion Thir. Statues of the Dragon Gods are arranged in a circle. Each is ten times the size of a colossal dragon, and each is inlaid with enough gemstones and precious metals to beggar a kingdom. Smaller statues of the fifteen Sovereigns stand at the feet of the greater deities. No images of the Progenitors are present. If questioned, a follower of Thir would be surprised. "Eberron is at your feet, Siberys above us, Khyber far below; what would be the point of trying to capture them in stone?"

Although dragons worship in their own way, dragon priests of the Thousand spend a great deal of time at the Valley of the Three. Some of the greatest priests of the past have actually merged with the landscape, becoming immortal guardians of this place. Young dragons who wish to learn the mysteries of the divine often come to the Valley to study with the elders.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

The Thousand is a dangerous place for adventurers. Nondragons are often killed on sight, and the area has the highest concentration of dragons in Argonnessen. Of course, lots of dragons means lots of treasure . . . although stealing from a dragon of the Thousand likely incurs the wrath of the entire flight.

Seed of Vvaraak: After a deadly adventure, the PCs acquire a large golden seed, said to be one of the last treasures Vvaraak gave to the Gatekeepers. The seed radiates an overpowering aura of universal magic, but it will not bloom. A prophet tells them that the plant grows only if nourished with a handful of soil from the base of the Face of Eberron. Can the adventurers acquire this potent soil? And what will spring from the Seed of Vvaraak?

Looming Threat: The adventurers' patron—a dragonmarked house, the King's Citadel, or a similar organization—believes that the dragons of Argonnessen are preparing to launch a devastating attack. The PCs must penetrate the Great Aerie and eavesdrop on the next session of the Conclave. If the rumor is true, are they bold enough to speak for Khorvaire and prevent devastation?

THE LIGHT OF SIBERYS

The Light of Siberys is the stronghold of the army of Argonnessen that bears the same name. This land still bears scars from the battles during the Age of Demons. It was the seat of fiendish power in Argonnessen in the first age, and ruins built by twisted rakshasa hands are still found across the territory, protected by spells so strong even the dragons cannot shatter them. Ancient battlefields are haunted by the ghosts of fallen dragons. Worst of all are the prisons of the Overlords; even in torpor and captivity, these fiends are so powerful that they corrupt the land above their vaults. Defending Argonnessen and the world from these horrors is a dangerous task, but the Soldiers of the Light stand strong against whatever darkness rises.

Dragon Population: 6,510.

Nondragon Population: 7,200 (42% stone giant, 30% goblinoid, 16% dwarf, 6% human, 6% other).

INDUSTRIES

The Light of Siberys maintains a host of armories and arcane workshops in its fortresses. It has been creating tools of war for nearly a hundred thousand years. The forges of Verthicha'vivex produce weapons and armor for the nondragon allies of the dragons, and for those dragons that choose to fight in humanoid form. Other dragons create magic items and lesser artifacts that can be used by dragons in battle. Much of the manual labor is done by dwarves and giants, but flames of the forge develop designs and provide the spell power needed to craft magic items.

Despite this strong industrial program, the Light of Siberys rarely exports any of its goods. All are needed for the task at hand . . . or the battles to come.

LIFE AND SOCIETY

The Light of Siberys is made up of dragons of all colors and ages. Although some of the dragons are "trueborn" or "born in the Light"—to families that have served the cause for generations—the majority of the young dragons come from the Thousand. Young adult dragons of the Thousand are forced to spend fifty years in the Vast or serve for fifty years in the Light of Siberys before they can return to claim land in the Thousand. Some choose to remain after the term is up, but life in the Light is intense, dangerous, and often thankless. Moreover, it clashes with the independent streak that runs through the psyche of the dragon. Most are glad to return to the peace of the Thousand.

A soldier of the Light is dedicated to his duty. Missions abound, from patrolling the skies to standing watch over the Pit of Five Sorrows to hunting down the Cult of Tiamat. Young adults might be frivolous, particularly those forced to work for the Light by the customs of the Thousand. Any adult or older dragon who chooses to abandon the safer life of the Thousand for the deadly duty of the Light, however, is a stern and implacable foe.

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

The dragons of the Light of Siberys follow a strict chain of command (see page 28). Although they normally patrol in squads of five or fewer, they are trained to operate in large numbers, and even the lowest-ranking officers, the Lanterns of Siberys, are trained to organize other dragons in times of war. Currently five dragons hold the rank of Glorious Flame. Only one Eternal Flame exists, the Lightkeeper Dolarashynach (LG female great wyrm silver dragon cleric 1/sacred warder of Bahamut^{Dr} 7/legendary leader^{HB} 5), and she guides the Soldiers of the Light from Verthicha'vivex, the Mountain of Victory.

For the most part, the dragons who serve the Light of Siberys are deeply devoted to their cause. However, exceptions exist. Some simply develop a taste for power and influence. Others are corrupted by the fiendish presences they combat. Regardless of the reason, a few dragons have sought to use their rank within the Light for their own personal benefit. Indeed, it could be that one of the current Glorious Flames is waiting for the right moment to help Dolarashynach move on to her eternal reward.

NONDRAGONS IN THE LIGHT OF SIBERYS

The nondragons found in the Light of Siberys are closely tied to the military efforts of the order. The stone giants serve as the backbone of the nondragon army and also help with the construction of fortifications and other large-scale projects. The dwarves are largely dedicated to forgework and mining. A force of hobgoblins and bugbears, descended from warriors of Dhakaan, have maintained the martial discipline of the empire; while the empire has fallen, they are sworn to battle the horrors of Khyber. A few humans and others from the city of Io'lokar have joined with the Light. In so doing, they hope to assuage any doubts the Conclave might have about their loyalty.

Unless foreigners can successfully pass as nondragons in the service of the Light, they are met with hostility. This territory is filled with dangerous sources of power and strongholds of the Talons of Tiamat—it is a bad place to be a trespasser.

IMPORTANT SITES

The Light of Siberys maintains watchtowers across this land, along with five fortresses and the mountain keep Verthicha'vivex. A watchtower is a tall pillar of magically reinforced stone with an aerie near the top. Limited barracks are located at the base for nondragon troops, but only fliers can reach the upper chambers. Architecture is simple and functional, blending magic and expert stonework. Beyond these fortifications, the region mixes wilderness with traces of the terrible wars of the Age of Demons.

The Pit of Five Sorrows: The most infamous site in Argonnessen, this is the prison of Tiamat, the Daughter of Khyber. A dome of force covers the top of this cavernous well, with garrison aeries carved into the walls of the abyssal shaft. Shifting light rises from the bottom—the pulsing colors of the immense Khyber shard that holds the spirit of Tiamat, slowly shifting through the ten colors of true dragons. Even in her slumber, Tiamat's mind is so powerful that anyone who passes beyond the dome of force can feel her presence. It is assumed that no dragon can resist her touch forever. A dragon must volunteer for guard duty in the Pit, and when his tour of duty is complete, he is executed, to ensure that his spirit has remained pure. It is a one-way mission, but those who survive it untainted and accept execution with dignity bring great honor to their flights.

The Pit of Five Sorrows holds many secrets, and it is one of the most carefully warded and secured locations on Eberron. An effort to penetrate the Pit should be a challenge for advanced epic-level characters.

The Harvest of Pain: This blasted wasteland is littered with immense bones and the stench of rotting flesh. Here an army of dragons faced the forces of Katashka the Gatekeeper, a rakshasa rajah and mighty necromancer. Katashka trapped the souls of his foes, binding them to the land in a gruesome parody of the rite of the draconic guardian. The entire region is considered to be coterminous with both Dolurrh and Shavarath, and under the effect of an *unhallow* spell. Dragon ghosts prowl the region, driven mad by their torment; these spirits attack anything unfortunate enough to cross their paths.

Vale of the Fallen Rajah: See page 50 for details on this tainted site.

Verthicha'vivex: The Mountain of Victory is the primary fortress of the Light of Siberys. Giants and dwarves toil ceaselessly in the forges, while dragons study the arts of war. Individual lairs scattered across the mountain provide dragons with an opportunity for solitude, but in times of danger, the fortress supports hundreds of dragons. Eldritch machines produce endless food and water, and the fortress walls are hardened against attack and shielded against scrying. This fortress is the work of one hundred thousand years of constant innovation; if the DM can think of an interesting defense, the dragons have surely already added it to Verthicha'vivex.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

The Light of Siberys is an immensely dangerous place for adventurers; it's just a question of whether they're killed by dragons, fiends, or cultists. However, amazing secrets and treasures are hidden in the ruins of the Age of Demons. Beyond that, what wonders have the dragons produced in their hidden forges? For those who can brave the many dangers, the rewards should be astonishing.

Haunted Weapon: A tablet dating back to the Age of Demons tells the story of Katashka the Gatekeeper and the Harvest of Pain. The tablet suggests the presence of an artifact weapon of immense power, never recovered because the dragons couldn't face the ghosts haunting the field. Can the party find a way into the depths to recover the blade? And is the weapon a tool that can be turned to good, or is it pure evil?

Sorrow's Path: To destroy a deadly artifact, the party must shatter it atop Tiamat's crystal at the very bottom of the Pit of Five Sorrows. Can the PCs convince the dragons to aid them in their quest, or will the rakshasas laugh as heroes and dragons do battle?

THE TAPESTRY

The Tapestry is the youngest and smallest of the territories, born less than four thousand years ago. The dragons of the Thousand cling to their individual flights, and to the traditions and philosophies they see as the property of their lineage. The founders of the Tapestry wanted to bring dragons of different colors together, to set aside the idea that influence and age were inseparable, and to consider new ideas about religion and the draconic Prophecy. They might have established themselves in the Vast, but many of the young dragons hated the violence found there. One of their main objections was the process of sending the young into the Vast, a tradition intended to weed out the weak. Initially, their efforts received little support from the Conclave, but they continued, predicting a great change in the shape of the Prophecy.

Then the first dragonmarks appeared.

In the wake of this event, the Conclave agreed to provide the young dragons with territory to continue their work. This land came to be known as the Tapestry of Thought, since it was intended as a land where all colors would come together as one. In time, the Conclave agreed to let the dragons of the Tapestry act abroad, and so the Chamber was born.

The Tapestry is the home base of the Chamber, although some dragons of the Vast serve in that body. In the Tapestry, dragon mystics, prophets, and sages continue their work, while their elders defend the activities of the Tapestry and the Chamber before the Conclave. Both the Eyes of Chronepsis and the wyrms of the Conclave have grave doubts about allowing dragons to intentionally interfere with the outcome of the Prophecy, and many wish to shut down these activities and force the dragons of the Chamber to rejoin the Thousand or disperse into the Vast. For now, however, the Tapestry remains a crucible for new ideas.

Dragon Population: Varies (averages 600).

Nondragon Population: 1,000 (39% human, 21% stone giant, 20% yuan-ti, 12% dwarf, 8% other).

INDUSTRIES

The Tapestry has no large-scale industries. However, its members are constantly exploring new paths of magic. Although they don't produce massive quantities of treasure, they might develop spells or magic items that can't be found elsewhere on Eberron.

LIFE AND SOCIETY

The dragons of the Tapestry believe that diversity spawns new ideas. Rather than continue the dragons' natural solitary ways, residents of the Tapestry collaborate with each other. Dragons spend their time working with one or more partners, switching frequently (for a dragon, this can mean anything from years to decades) to gain new perspectives. Dragons of different colors work far more closely than in the Thousand, and, in a few cases, Tapestry dragons have chosen to pair-bond in spite of a difference in color.

Even though they have liberal ideas regarding relationships between dragons and the newly formed bond between nondragons and the Prophecy, the members of the Tapestry are still dragons. They display great arrogance. Although they are intrigued by the destiny of the nondragon races, most still consider them to be lesser creatures. Some even champion the theory that the best approach is the destruction of the dragonmarked.

The Prophecy is of great concern to the members of the Tapestry, but they are also interested in advancing understanding of all knowledge, from magic to the physical sciences. Combined with their arrogance, these lofty aspirations could have disastrous results; humans aren't the only ones who can reach for something beyond their grasp.

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

The Tapestry was founded on the idea that all dragons should have an equal voice, setting aside the traditional hierarchies of age and color. The Tapestry holds its own conclaves at Vorel'arux, the Valley of Beauty. All dragons are invited to participate in discussion and voting, but in truth few do—few dragons are as interested in the administration of the territory as they are in the acquisition of knowledge. As a result, several older dragons have accumulated considerable influence within the territory. These dragons helped found the Tapestry when they were mere adults, and now, thousands of years later, they have grown into their glory. Only great wyrms can speak at the Conclave of Ashtakala, and these dragons have taken up that role. The wisest among them is a loredrake, Jancarlyrix (N male great wyrm bronze dragon loremaster 3). Although he is the strongest voice the Tapestry has, Jancarlyrix still holds to the core doctrine of the territory and takes care to listen to the younger dragons around him.

NONDRAGONS IN THE TAPESTRY

Despite their enlightened views on dragon relations and the fact that the Chamber works closely with nondragons, the dragons of the Tapestry have little love for the lesser races. Many take the lessons of Aureon's Folly seriously and believe that nondragons simply cannot be trusted. Some are exceptions—a few dragons maintain teams of human scribes or stone giant guardians, and others train promising Serens to serve as agents in the wider world. But in general, nondragons are rare in the Tapestry, and dragons treat foreigners with great suspicion if not outright hostility. An adventurer had best bring valuable information, or have some other way to win the trust of a dragon, if he wishes to roam through the Tapestry.

This attitude toward nondragons is one of the main differences between those who reside in the Tapestry and the other supporters of the Chamber, the dragons who founded Io'lokar (page 40). The two factions share similar goals, but as the latter dragons explore the Prophecy, they are typically looking for outcomes that will aid the lesser races as well as Argonnessen.

A small but significant force of yuan-ti is hidden in the Tapestry. Driven into war against the dragons after the destruction of Io'vakas, these clever spies have long been draconic foes. They seek to steal the wisdom of the Chamber and use it against all dragons.

IMPORTANT SITES

The Tapestry is a small territory, and the dragons live quite close to one another—more like flight-brothers in the Thousand than the dominion lords of the Vast. Due to the type of work done in the Tapestry, a large number of planar observatories and other wondrous locations exist.

The Crystal Library of Azalakardon: The blue dragon Azalakardon was a brilliant prophet and one of the most strident voices promoting the Chamber's active role in directing the path of the Prophecy. Then something happened—some claim he received a prophetic vision that he couldn't accept, and it broke him inside. He became paranoid and reclusive, and one day he simply disappeared. Divination has produced no results, but it's well known that his private sanctum is shielded with epic-level magics. Many say that his sanctum includes thousands of spellshard journals—the greatest collection of information on the Prophecy ever assembled, including the secret that drove him mad. By now Azalakardon must be dead of old age, but his library has never been found. What traps guard this trove of knowledge?

Vorel'arux: The Valley of Beauty is a meeting place where the dragons of the Tapestry come together to share ideas and conduct research. Although it is not a permanent residence, at least a dozen dragons can be found in the Valley. See page 52 for more information.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

Although the dragons of the Tapestry are rarely pleased to see adventurers in their land, they aren't likely to be as aggressive as the dragons of the other territories. In addition, the Tapestry doesn't have as many dangerous wandering monsters as the Vast or the Light of Siberys (aside from dragons and yuan-ti, few creatures in the region have a CR over 11).

Setup!: Adventurers who have formed an alliance with the Chamber receive a rare invitation to visit Vorel'arux. While they are there, a team of yuan-ti thieves successfully raids the archives and frames the party. The PCs must quickly cool draconic tempers to prove their innocence—but even if they do, can they find the yuan-ti and recover the stolen scrolls?

Library Search: The party finds a series of cryptic clues revealing the location of the Crystal Library of Azalakardon. But another group has found the same clues—a team of rakshasas who intend to use the power of the library to increase their standing in the Lords of Dust. Do the adventurers turn to the Chamber for help, or do they seek the treasures for their own? When the library is breached, an epic-level dracolich is waiting for them. Is it Azalakardon? Is he insane and deadly? Or has he been waiting for them to arrive—prepared to set them on the path leading to their true destiny?

THE VAST

In Draconic, this territory is called *Dja'Valarach.* In Common, it is typically translated as "the Vast," interpreted as a great void or open space. But to a dragon, the word holds far deeper meaning. It is the space around a dragon in flight. It is the freedom to move in any direction. It hints at the infinite possibilities of the future, unbound and vast. That is what the Vast represents to the dragons of Argonnessen—freedom and uncertainty. It is a land without rules, where dragons are free to exult in their power and might, to match wits with other dragons and to rule over lesser creatures.

First and foremost, the Vast is a proving ground. When a dragon of the Thousand becomes a young adult, it is given the choice to serve the Light of Siberys or to find its own way in the Vast. Those who go to the Vast must remain there for at least fifty years; those who survive to become adults might return to the Thousand and claim a lair within the dominion of their flight. However, some choose to remain in the Vast. These dragons prefer the challenge and uncertainty of life in this land. Life in the Thousand is stable, but stagnant. In the Vast, a dragon can be a conqueror, a tyrant, or a defender of the innocent. Every day could end in a life-or-death struggle, and for many dragons, that thrill is worth the risk.

Dragon Population: Varies (approximately 4,000).

Nondragon Population: 142,900 (21% human, 17% goblinoid, 12% orc, 11% dwarf, 10% shifter, 9% stone giant, 3% yuan-ti, 3% changeling, 3% halfling, 3% gnome, 8% other).

INDUSTRIES

Although no industries span the territory, many dominion lords (see Government and Politics, below) force their subjects to mine for ores and precious gems, and to produce goods worthy of a dragon's hoard. A dominion lord might use these goods to barter with other dragons, potentially trading treasure for slaves as a human might purchase livestock, or offering tribute in exchange for a temporary alliance against another dragon.

The Vast also trades in nondragons. In addition to "importing" creatures from other continents, dragons of the Vast are the primary source for the nondragons found in other territories. A dragon who returns to the Thousand could bring retainers with him, while a dragon of the Tapestry might recruit research assistants from Io'lokar.

LIFE AND SOCIETY

The dragons of the Vast are free to do whatever they want. Life is a deadly game, with living creatures as the pawns. A dragon can take any land that he can hold, and any other dragon can try to take it from him. Gold, treasure, slaves—all these are part of the game of power, the never-ending struggle for status. Some dragons revel in the violence and spend their days hunting the most challenging prey that they can find. Some live in hedonistic splendor among nondragons who worship them. A few actually enjoy protecting lesser creatures; they take pleasure in defending their subjects from the depredations of cruel ravagers and rulers.

The dragons of the Vast relish their conflicts with other dragons. These contests can be drawn out over months or years. A victorious dragon often spares his victim in their first battle, to give the loser time to contemplate the loss and prepare for his final defeat. Although some ravagers thrive on blood and rage, for most dragons, the game is more satisfying than the actual victory. The conflict, not the resolution, is the event to be savored.

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

A dragon who establishes and holds a significant area in the Vast is known as a dominion lord. His status in the eyes of the other lords is based on the size of his domain, his hoard, the number of nondragons he commands, and the number and nature of dragons he has defeated. Though age is typically a factor, achievement is just as important in the Vast; if a young dragon can consistently defeat his elders, he will gain respect . . . and become a target for others.

Many dragons leave the Vast after becoming adults. Many more don't survive to adulthood. But some remain in the Vast for their entire lives. These elder dominion lords rarely challenge the young; slaying a young adult black dragon provides little challenge or satisfaction for a gold great wyrm. These elders continue to play their games with others of similar age, but they also work to maintain the Vast. They import new monsters to replace those slain in battle. They do what is necessary to keep the nondragon population within manageable levels, and restock the supplies if the population falls too low. And they represent the Vast in the Conclave of Argonnessen. They rarely speak with one voice, but they defend their way of life and the importance of this free realm.

NONDRAGONS IN THE VAST

The Vast has the highest nondragon population of any of the territories. These lesser races have been brought to Argonnessen over the course of a hundred thousand years. Hobgoblins, whose ancestors were saved from the downfall of the Empire of Dhakaan, still sing the songs of the *duur'kala*—the Dhakaani dirge singers. Elves, whose ancestors were brought from the shores of Xen'drik long before the elf–giant wars, know nothing of the Undying Court or the Tairnadal. There are nondragons never seen in Khorvaire, members of races that were exterminated by the giants or the daelkyr. The range of communities that can be found are dizzying. Some are metropolitan, with members of a dozen races living under one roof. Other communities are racially isolated, steadfastly preserving secrets of their forgotten cultures.

Of course, all these creatures have one aspect in common: They live beneath the shadow of the dragon overlords. To a dominion lord, nondragons are an extension of his hoard. Other dragons might try to steal creatures from his domain, or just slaughter his subjects; life is always uncertain, and an attack could come at any time. Two dominion lords could have completely different styles of rule. Some make frequent shows of force and often require living sacrifices. A few demand worship, and in some cases, their subjects truly believe that these dragons are deities; a few of the oldest dominion lords have developed cadres of fanatical soldiers ready to die for their dragon masters. Life in the Vast can be brutal and short, but the people of this land know little else.

IMPORTANT SITES

Argonnessen adventurers are most familiar with the Vast. Although few people have entered Argonnessen and returned to speak of it, many have heard tales of Totem Beach and the mountains of the Great Barrier. A few have even heard tales of Io'lokar, the legendary City of Knowledge.

Fang Crater: This pit is hundreds of miles across and punches deep into the earth. The stone rim is blackened and smooth, and volcanic gases rise from cracks and vents in the walls. The crater was caused by a planar incursion from Fernia, when forces from the Sea of Fire flooded into Argonnessen. The Light of Siberys repelled the assault, and the loredrakes sealed the rift. Still, a manifest zone to Fernia remains at the very center of the crater—a pit of lava more than a mile wide.

An ancient, ruined observatory is set into the rim of the crater; this plays an important role in the adventure *Eyes of the Lich Queen*.

Io'lokar: This fabled city—along with the ruins of its sister city, Io'vakas—lies in the south of the Vast, deep in Argonnessen. More information about Io'lokar can be found beginning on the next page.

Nestling Plateau: This region is set aside for the youngest members of the Vast. It is essentially a training ground, where newcomers can test their wits against each other before claiming a dominion in the Vast proper. It's rare to encounter a dragon older than a young adult here; most monsters are CR 11 or lower. However, if adventurers or other nondragons take advantage of this—slaying too many of the dragons or stealing their rightful prey—it should attract the attention of one of the great wyrms who maintains the Vast.

Totem Beach: Massive idols are spread across the northwestern coast of Argonnessen, carved to resemble the heads of mighty dragons. The Serens consider this sacred ground, and often gather along the beach to perform holy rites. Most of the Seren tribes have a patron (whom they consider to be a god) among the lords of the Vast. A few dominion lords have given their tribes permission to settle along the beach and the in Great Barrier Mountains, and these Serens fiercely defend this territory from foreign invaders. A segment of Totem Beach is detailed on page 48.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

The Vast is a dangerous land. Its founders have populated it with vicious monsters from across Eberron, creatures intended to pose a threat to dragons. Thus, almost any beast imaginable could be encountered in the Vast. Furthermore, the dominion lords are always looking for a new challenge, and a party of adventurers makes excellent sport. That said, the Vast is actually one of the best areas for adventurers to explore. Because of the large nondragon population, PCs might be able to blend in with the locals, or find temporary shelter. The constant struggle between dragons also provides adventurers with an opportunity to gain dragon allies—although they have to be careful not to draw down the wrath of the elder dominion lords.

Ultimate Hunt: After being drugged or incapacitated by magical means, the PCs wake in the domain of a powerful dragon. This stalking wyrm seeks challenging prey, and the adventurers' reputation has earned them this dubious honor. If they can survive for 24 hours, they will be rewarded and sent home. Let the game begin!

Hidden Seer: The conflict between the warring Heirs of Dhakaan is at a critical point. Tuura Dhakaan (*ECS* 154) contacts the adventurers. If they help her take the throne, she swears to keep the Dhakaani from threatening the Five Kingdoms. To complete the ritual of coronation, she needs to be blessed by a Dhakaani crown seer. Only one is left in the world, and she lives in the city of Io'lokar. Can the party reach her and convince her to return to the land of her ancestors?

Lost Village: Rumors suggest that a village was taken from Cyre just before the Day of Mourning, that elders of the Vast transported the entire village to Argonnessen. Perhaps the village held secrets of House Cannith. Or maybe Queen Dannel herself was passing through the village on the day she was thought lost. Is the Queen of Cyre still alive, trapped in servitude in the land of the dragons?

PLACES OF INTEREST

IO'LOKAR, CITY OF KNOWLEDGE

Free City of Argonnessen, Metropolis, Population 46,000

From the moment it appears on the horizon, the city is a beacon against the darkening sky. Walls of white rise and twist against the highest reaches of the black peak, gleaming in the day's dying light. From one of the great towers that ring those walls, dark shapes shoot up—wyvern riders, from the look of them, winging into flanking position to shadow your approach. Atop the closest tower, dragons are perched, watching you idly. Beside them stand giants armed with mighty greatswords, the nighttime city beyond them blazing with spell-light as you begin your descent.

Throughout their long history, the dragons of Argonnessen have built no cities for their own kind. However, some thirty centuries ago, a great nondragon city called Io'vakas was founded by the Warders—a group of a dozen dragons dedicated to improving the lot of Argonnessen's lesser races. With dragon magic and the labor of nondragon subjects collected from across Eberron, the Warders built a walled enclave deep in the south of the Vast. Under the tutelage of their draconic lieges, the citizens of Io'vakas—the Gate of Knowledge—became enlightened dragon worshipers with an advanced understanding of nature, science, and magic.

Today, Io'vakas is a mass of shattered stone jutting up from ground made barren by dragon fire. But each morning as the sun rises above those ruins, it reflects off distant towers against the slopes of a bare peak to the west. This place is very much alive; it is Io'lokar, the City of Knowledge—risen from the ashes of Io'vakas a thousand years ago.

Even among the nondragons of Argonnessen, Io'lokar is often thought of as myth. Beyond the dragon continent, many experienced adventurers have never heard of it. Argonnessen is a land of high-level and epic campaigns, and nowhere is this fact reflected more than in the City of Knowledge. From the highest to the lowest, the Io'lokari are unequaled warriors, brilliant sages, powerful spellcasters, and masters of the arts of a dozen races.

Most NPCs in the city have levels in three or more classes—a primary vocation (often handed down from parent to child), secondary vocations taken from interest, and a spellcasting class (typically adept or sorcerer). Children here take their first class levels by early adolescence. The Io'lokari are the masters of vocations both great and mundane, and all reap the benefit of their advanced society. A lowly clerk living in the Freeward might well be a 7th-level expert/8th-level adept whose accumulated knowledge would make a Morgrave professor weep.

The people of Io'lokar do not have access to the full power of dragon magic. The fate of the giants of Xen'drik has ensured that no nondraconic culture will ever be granted such a boon again. Nonetheless, magic permeates every corner of the city and every one of its people, and a first visit to Io'lokar can induce awe in even jaded explorers.

Within the city, spell-light is infused into the air itself, rising and falling according to the time of day and the presence of passersby. Residents and visitors alike within Io'lokar's walls can access the powers of flight (as a *fly* spell) and short-distance teleportation (as *dimension door*), though teleporting into or out of public spaces is considered somewhat rude. Magic tempers the climate and the seasons, feeds the city's people, and hones the skills of its scholars, artisans, and workers to unnatural levels.

The Io'lokari are not given to ostentation or casual displays of power, however. The city has no floating towers or wanton exhibitions of sorcerous might. Though its walls and buildings are reinforced by arcane power, they were raised one stone at a time. However, within these nondescript apartments of multicolored marble can be found collected lore rivaling that of

COMMERCE IN IO'LOKAR

For the people of the City of Knowledge, wealth lies in the life of learning and wonder that each new day brings. Goods and services are traded on the basis of effort alone—a day's labor from a city street sweeper is considered equal to a day's labor from the highest-level spellcaster, warrior, or sage.

Many high-level adventurers from Khorvaire have trouble adjusting to the idea that wealth built up over a lifetime is all but worthless in Io'lokar. In the taverns of the city, the Io'lokari drink for free, trading their day's work for the labor of brewer and barkeep. Visitors to the city have no such capital, though PCs can typically trade a first night on the town for tales or songs of the outside world. Characters staying longer in the city need to establish what goods or services they can offer that are worthy of barter.

The Io'lokari want for very little, but fine jewelry, magic weapons, magic armor, and wondrous items usually retain their value in the city. This value is relative, however, and does not scale in the same way as gold piece pricing. A tavernkeeper willing to barter a month's lodging for a magic weapon makes no distinction between a *+1 dagger* and a *+5 holy vorpal short sword of wounding.* Either option satisfies his desire for a magic blade, and is thus fair trade for the PCs' need for a comfortable room and good food.

Morgrave, Wynarn, and Korranberg combined—all the product of a humble working-class people whose lives more closely resemble those of lords and kings.

Leadership: The Masters of Io'lokar.

Demographics: 14% human, 13% dwarf, 12% goblin and hobgoblin, 11% elf and half-elf, 11% changeling, 10% orc and half-orc, 10% halfling, 10% gnome, 8% shifter, 1% other.

Economics: None (see the Commerce in Io'lokar sidebar).

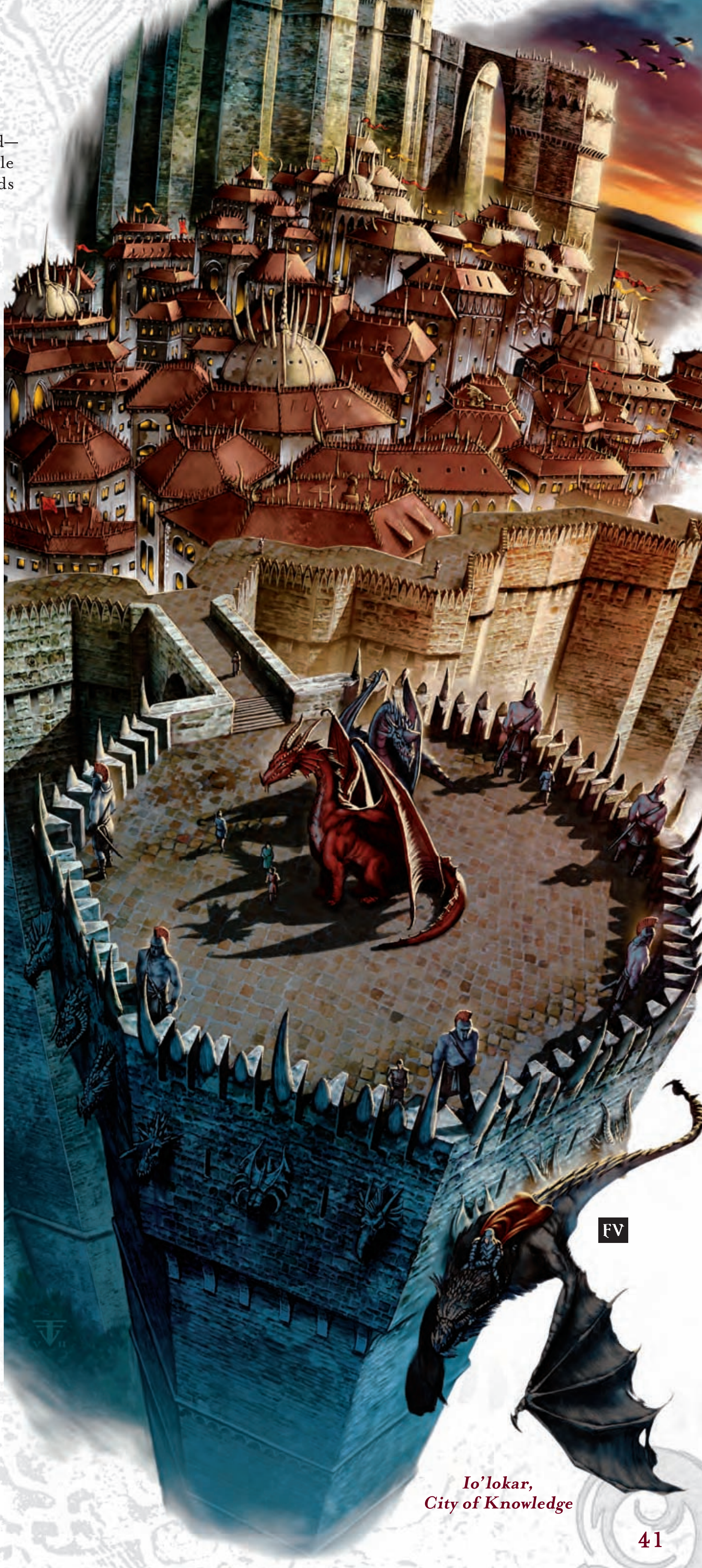
HISTORY

The creation of Io'vakas thirty centuries ago was preceded by centuries of debate and anger among the dragons of Argonnessen. With the Chamber still in its infancy, most dragons opposed the Warders' plans for empowering the lesser races. The idea of sharing even a small amount of draconic knowledge was anathema to many dragons, the fate of Xen'drik still sharp in their memories. In the end, though, the Warders prevailed. Io'vakas was built in the Vast with the tacit blessing of the Conclave and the Eyes of Chronepsis, and for two thousand years, the city thrived. Then the yuan-ti came from Sarlona, and the doomsayers proved correct.

When the serpent folk arrived in exile, the best among them were invited to Io'vakas. There, they joined the other nondragons of the city in a bountiful life that included worship of the fifteen ascended spirits of the Sovereigns—a gift of faith to the nondragons from their dragon masters. However, at least one sect of the Io'vakas yuan-ti sought more power than the Sovereigns could grant. In secret, this group claimed the direct worship of the Dragon Gods—and the deepest mysteries of dragon magic—for themselves.

When this blasphemy was eventually discovered, the dragons who opposed the Io'vakas experiment demanded a swift and final response. Refusing to distinguish between those who transgressed and the bulk of the loyal yuan-ti, or even the Io'vakas citizenry as a whole, draconic might was unleashed. Under a storm of lightning, frost, and fire, Io'vakas was leveled. A dozen or so yuan-ti escaped to the catacombs beneath the city; the rest of the serpent race, including all the priests, was destroyed. From ruined Io'vakas, a pathetic few nondragon survivors fled to the plains beneath a sky darkened by gathering rogues, anxious to add these so-called scions of knowledge to their own herds.

Then Arnaarlasha, a noble gold dragon great wyrm of the Warders, descended to the



Io'lokar, City of Knowledge

wasted plain. She and a dozen elder dragons loyal to her formed a protective cordon around a thousand desperate survivors of the city. On foot, they shepherded their charges across hostile territory to the slopes of Mount Erishnak, a granite peak in the center of Arnaarlasha's own adjacent territory. To the assembled rogues and the Soldiers of the Light who had pounded Io'vakas and her inhabitants to rubble, Arnaarlasha declared the surviving nondragons free subjects of her dominion. Over the year that followed, high on the mountainside, Io'lokar was raised.

Arnaarlasha never spoke of what drove her actions that day on the plains, nor will she ever do so. Four hundred years ago, the great wyrm's death marked the city's darkest hour, and a turning point. Within a day, Io'lokar was besieged by a coordinated attack of rogue dragons intent on claiming Arnaarlasha's territory and razing the city. Beneath arcane defenses honed over six centuries, the city's mages stood fast. Alongside the Keepers, flights of wyvern riders launched themselves from the Moontowers, harrying rogues in the air as they rained arcane fury against their reinforcements on the ground. After four days, the rogues retreated. Io'lokar stood fast, and its victory in the Battle of Arnaarlasha's Fall is celebrated to this day.

Throughout the great battle, the Eyes of Chronepsis and the Light of Siberys were conspicuous by their absence, a display of indifference they maintain to this day. As long as the Io'lokari are careful to stay within the boundaries of behavior proscribed for them when Io'vakas was new, the Conclave seems content to leave the city be. However, both the Io'lokari and the Keepers accept that the city exists at the Conclave's whim. If any nondragons seek the forbidden lore of dragonkind once again, or should any yuan-ti presence be again tolerated, no force of will or lesser magic will be enough to save them.

LIFE IN IO'LOKAR

In the twelve hundred years since, the City of Knowledge has grown from a mountainside fort (part of what is now the Freeward) to its present form. Within its walls, scholars, crafters, and artisans from a dozen nondragon races live side by side in common cause and culture. Though the Warders long ago stepped back to let the Io'lokari run their own affairs, the city remains dedicated to allowing nondragon culture to flourish on its own terms.

Even after three thousand years, however, many of the city's sages believe that the Warders had a deeper purpose in their creation of a nondragon city within the dragon continent. In the same way that the dragons are said to shun Sarlona because they have seen that land's destruction in the unfurling of the draconic Prophecy, some suggest that the Prophecy predicts the eventual destruction of all nondragon life on Eberron. Whether this destruction will come at the hands of the quori, some unknown magical or natural disaster, or through the actions of the lesser races themselves remains unknown. Either way, Io'lokar (and Io'vakas before it) might have been created as a safe haven for humanity—a place in which the scions of Sarlona, Xen'drik, and Khorvaire might live on.

Today, the city is home to the some of the finest crafters, artisans, and spellcasters in the world. However, mercantilism does not drive the art, craft, and magic of Io'lokar as it does in Khorvaire. Though the city has no effective gold piece limit, coin has no value here. Gems have use as currency only if they appeal to an individual Io'lokari's eye. All Io'lokari work toward the continued survival of the city and the betterment of their own lives.

THE IO'LOKARI

With the exception of the kalashtar, all the advanced nondragon races of Eberron were present at the creation of Io'lokar, and they remain a part of the city to this day. The descendants of lesser races gathered by the dragons of old from across Eberron, the Io'lokari have long since developed a culture all their own. Given names are a unique blend of Draconic and a dozen other languages, while surnames are unknown here. The folk of the city have an in-depth knowledge of their own genealogy (a necessity in such a closed population); an Io'lokari knows which of his fellow citizens he is closely related to. Even so, he and his relatives are considered full family to the elves, orcs, changelings, and all the other races they work alongside. Likewise, the goblins and dwarves working side by side in the Freeward would be culturally unrecognizable to their distant kin in Darguun or the Ironroot Mountains.

MAGIC IN IO'LOKAR

Some speculate that sorcerous blood is one of the criteria originally used by the dragons to select those who would live in Io'vakas, but it seems just as likely that the Io'lokari's advanced knowledge of magic simply allows them to fully develop even the slightest trace of spellcasting potential. Virtually all the citizens of Io'lokar have some spellcasting ability, and that ability outshines the spellcasting talents of the workaday NPC magewrights, adepts, artificers, and sorcerers of Khorvaire.

Io'lokar represents a good opportunity to introduce new spells and magic items from non-Eberron supplements into your game, including *Spell Compendium* and *Magic Item Compendium*. Additionally, the variant spell points spellcasting system introduced in *Unearthed Arcana* makes a useful addition to Io'lokar, giving the city's spellcaster NPCs maximum flexibility in their individual vocations within the city. PCs spending time in Io'lokar might choose to learn this "advanced" manner of spellcasting from an NPC patron, at the DM's discretion.

Like their dragon patrons, the Io'lokari are an insular society—many live their whole lives without ever setting foot outside the city walls. Those who travel typically do so for scholarly pursuits, journeying across Argonnessen and beyond. Io'lokar is hardly a prison, however, and high-level citizens often leave the city to take up positions as advisors or scholars with benevolent dragon lords or agents of the Chamber.

Although the high-level characters of Io'lokar would no doubt have little trouble establishing themselves as powerful lords in Khorvaire or Xen'drik, those lands have little to offer. A high-level Khorvairian might dream of wealth or power. A high-level Sarlonan might dream of ending injustice. Io'lokari dream of peace, friendship, and the pursuit of ever greater knowledge. Their city is the best place to achieve that.

Io'lokar's population has been effectively stable for nearly four hundred years, even with a steady number of immigrants. The city has high standards, and those unable to meet them usually have little interest in embracing its philosophies in the first place. High-level NPCs sometimes flee here from the holds of other dominion lords, typically infuriating their former masters. Often, refugees from the Vast come to Io'lokar in greater numbers than the city can handle. Once such folk are returned to health, it is thought that the Io'lokari quietly teleport them to the holds of more benevolent lords, but this has never been confirmed.

Of all those who seek the City of Knowledge, only yuan-ti and half-dragons are denied entry. Although the Io'lokari know that examples of nobility exist even among the serpent folk and the dragon scions, the dragons' dedication to destroying these creatures makes their presence in the city too great a risk. It is rumored that persecuted half-dragons often pass through Io'lokar on their way to better lives in exile in Khorvaire or Xen'drik, but the Io'lokari shun the half-dragon cultists and dragon hunters common in Argonnessen.

No matter what their moral bent, the Io'lokari take a decidedly neutral approach to the affairs of Eberron. Like the Warders who first brought their ancestors here, the folk of Io'lokar are emphatically devoted to the Prophecy. However, unlike the dragons of the Chamber, the Io'lokari are content to watch history unfold on its own terms. A party seeking aid in Io'lokar to prevent some Khorvairewide catastrophe and another group hunting the epic magic with which to cause that catastrophe would likely both be met with indifference.

This is not to say that Io'lokar is inhabited solely by distant aesthetes or self-obsessed scholars. The folk of the city are a rich and varied lot, and Chamber sympathizers, sages skimming secrets from their colleges, and adventurers who have developed a taste for profit can all be found here. The appearance of a band of Khorvairian adventurers causing trouble might be all it takes to bring such characters out of the shadows.

GETTING THERE

As with any location in Argonnessen, getting to Io'lokar by ground can be a daunting task. Travel by air is easier, whether on flying mounts or by magic. However, such flights are almost guaranteed to attract the attention of rogue dragons and other predators.

Once characters have been to Io'lokar, *greater teleport* becomes the easiest way to and from the city. This method is typically used by Io'lokari abroad, and such travelers often teleport parties of strangers back with them. However, it is not financial gain that drives Io'lokari altruism, but knowledge and the prosperity of the city as a whole. PCs must convince an Io'lokari that their need to visit the city warrants such a trip—a DC 40 Diplomacy check.

Though the city controls no territory, the area around the mountain is patrolled by dragons loyal to the Warders. For the most part, Io'lokar's immediate neighbors are at least indifferent to the city's existence, but holds in the Vast can change hands with little warning.

THE CITY WARDS

Io'lokar consists of five walled wards rising up the slope of the mountain. Like the draconic culture on which it was modeled, rank and respect for power are the heart and soul of the city. Wards are defined by the work that goes on there and the relative power of their residents. In general terms, the higher the ward, the higher the level of the characters to be found there.

The descriptions below outline the typical adult inhabitants of each city ward, and provide lower cutoff points for primary class and level. Use the *Player's Handbook* classes mentioned below as guidelines for other classes.

THE ARNAARACAEX

Io'lokar's most distinctive nondragon residents are the Arnaaracaex, or Swords of Arnaarlasha. When Io'lokar was built, the great gold wyrm established this extended clan of stone giants as its defenders. The descendants of Xen'drik giants who had willingly served Arnaarlasha's line for generations, they have served the city just as unfailingly.

The Arnaaracaex are all stone giant elders (MM 124), but add *antimagic field, globe of invulnerability,* and *break enchantment* to their standard list of spell-like abilities. Their leaders are typically 6th-level sorcerers. They inhabit the Moontowers of which they are the custodians, but the giants are often found at large in the city. It is not known what life-bond originally dedicated the giants to Arnaarlasha's line, but their allegiance to Io'lokar is absolute.

The Freeward

Io'lokar's lowest ward seems misnamed to many first-time visitors, since the people here are no freer than anywhere else in the city. However, the original translation from Draconic involves the concept of "freedom" from authority and power. The people of this ward are thus the lower castes—the mundane servants, laborers, smiths, crafters, and clerks who keep the city going. Most visitors need this fact explained to them, however, because the Freeward bears more resemblance to a noble's enclave than any Khorvairian working-class borough. Buildings here are a riot of color and architectural styles, and the nighttime streets are alive with music and light.

Visitors to the city are initially welcome in the Freeward and nowhere else, but because the city sees few travelers, inns are nonexistent here. Most taverns feature private dining rooms easily converted to short-term residences for the right barter price. Alternatively, PCs can seek lodging in private homes.

The wall gates that lead to the upper wards are unguarded, and citizens of Io'lokar move through the city at will. However, strangers are easily recognized, and will be stopped and questioned as to their business. Those not in the upper wards at the invitation of a resident are politely directed back to the Freeward. A second warning often finds characters deposited by force outside the city gate.

Typical Residents: Characters of 11th level or lower; barbarians, fighters, rangers, and rogues of 8th level or lower; characters with NPC class levels only; visitors to the city of any level.

The Terrace

Io'lokar's second tier is home to the city's professional warriors and scouts, and to lower-rank spellcasters. Most of the guides and explorers that a PC party might seek in the city can be found here. The spellcasters of the Terrace are those whose talents keep the magic items and imbued spells of the city functioning. Magic crafters of all stripes can be found here, and the ward is alive with artful illusions and magical entertainments day and night.

Typical Residents: Characters of 12th to 15th level; sorcerers and wizards of 8th level or lower; clerics and druids of 10th level or lower; bards, monks, and paladins of 8th level or lower.

The Sunward

The first of two tiers that wrap the mountain slope on all sides, the Sunward is home to higher-rank spellcasters, lower-grade academics, and the city's most respected entertainers. Its cobbled streets are quieter than those of the lower tiers, but the ward's theaters draw audiences from across the city.

Typical Residents: Characters of 16th or 17th level.

The Height

This stately ward is a hub of academic and scholarly tradition, and is thus the virtual heart of Io'lokar. The city's four great colleges are here, as are the apartments of their wizards, sages, and loremasters. More so than in the lower wards, the architecture here reflects the soaring stone and crystalline style seen in the draconic observatories of Argonnessen (*Explorer's Handbook* 115).

Typical Residents: Characters of 18th or 19th level.

The Bastion

At the apex of the mountain, the walls of the Bastion protect the chambers and residences of Io'lokar's powerful residents. These are the sages and scholars who direct the work of the colleges, plan the city's sanctioned expeditions to sites across Argonnessen, and magically monitor the actions and intrigues of the dragons of the Vast. Unlike in the lower wards, the Bastion's wall gate is guarded by four of the Arnaaracaex and powerful magic wards.

Typical Residents: Characters of 20th level or higher.

FEATURES OF THE CITY

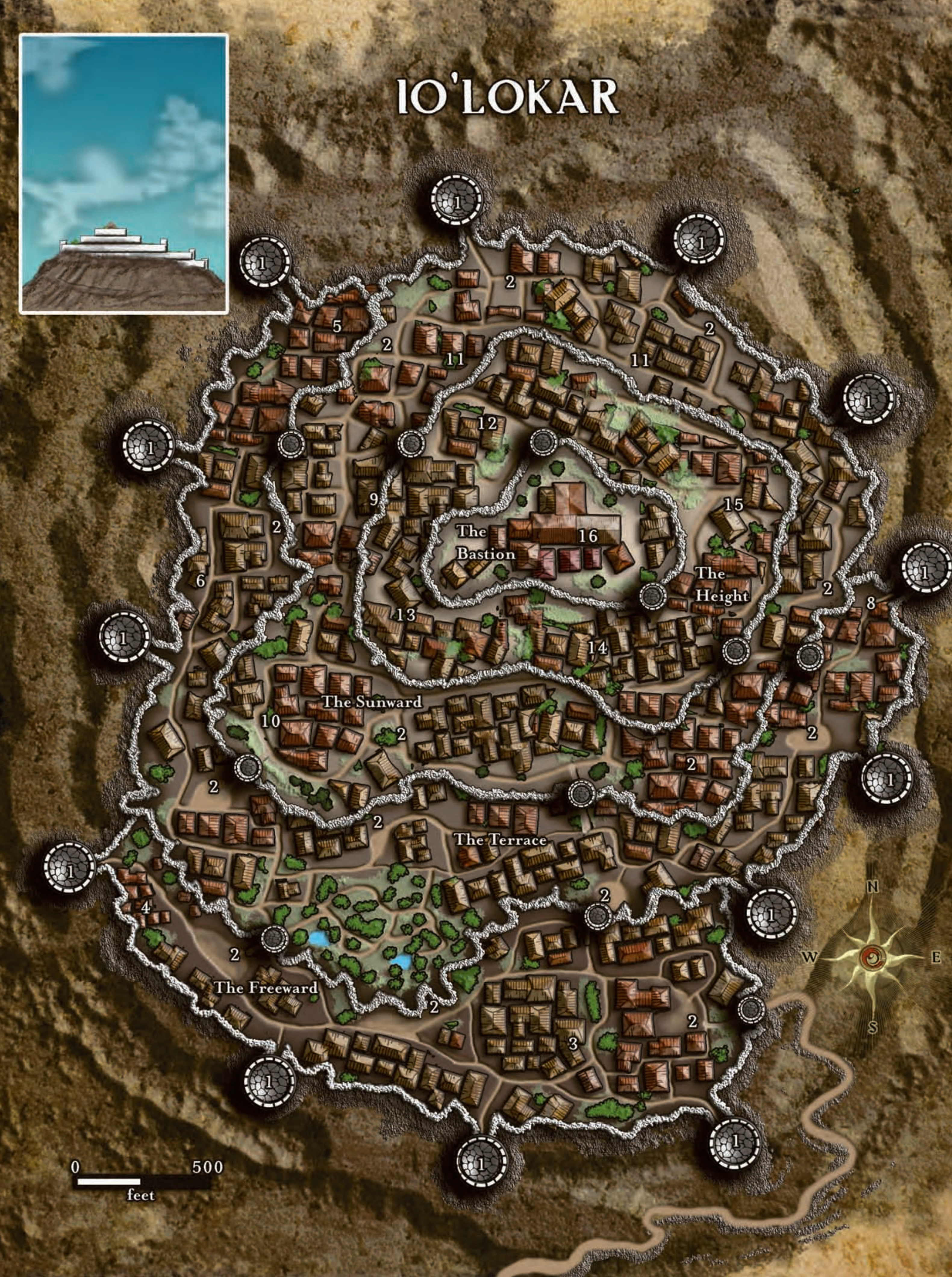
Presented below are just a few of the sites of possible interest to PCs looking to use Io'lokar as a base of operations for an Argonnessen campaign. Io'lokar is unlike any Khorvairian city, however, and traditional shops and places of business are all but unknown here. The difference between a tavern and a house with a large living room and a jovial host is often irrelevant to the Io'lokari.

1. The Moontowers: Jutting from the city walls like upswept spears, the thirteen Moontowers serve as watch points and guard posts for the Arnaaracaex. Connected to the city by great arched stairways, each tower is ringed with dragon skulls magically embedded into the stone, a dark reminder of how seriously the Arnaaracaex take their duties. The great towers also provide landing sites for dragons and other flying visitors, and are where any visiting dragons lodge while in the city. Beneath the top-level living quarters of the stone giants lie a series of spacious draconic guest chambers accessed from the outside tower walls.

The Arnaaracaex keep a constant watch for agents of the dominion lords who openly challenge the city, but for the most part, the dragons stopping in Io'lokar are long-range travelers seeking a safe layover in the Vast. Such dragons are an excellent source of intelligence and campaign hooks from elsewhere in Argonnessen.

Dragons also sometimes come to the city seeking nondragon agents for missions of the Chamber or individual dragon lords. The rare Io'lokari adventurers are particular about the types of assignments they accept, so foreign parties are coveted as heroes for hire—especially those willing to be paid in treasure the Io'lokari disdain.

2. Public Markets: Expert crafters display wares of incomparable beauty and quality in the city's many markets, and virtually any magic item of the DM's choosing can be found at a crafter's stall. However, the markets of Io'lokar operate exclusively on the city's system of commonwealth and barter. For the most part, city folk simply take what they need of their fellow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citizens' wares, knowing that the work they do is fair trade for these goods. New visitors to the city can attempt to barter their own services or goods, but are often limited to looking on enviously as the Io'lokari shop.

3. The Steelbenders: This loose affiliation of weaponsmiths and armorsmiths (typical expert 15/warrior 5/magewright 3) resembles many of the crafter and artisan enclaves of the Freeward. Its residents live in palatial second- and third-floor apartments above well-appointed workshops whose anvils ring from morning to night.

Many of the city's crafter enclaves open their homes to visitors with demonstrable skill in the same areas. In addition, the smiths here trade their services for foreign arms and armor they have not seen before (including weapons of Xen'drik and Sarlona). Like most smiths in the city, members of this enclave work only on magic armor and weapons.

4. House of Life: This enclave of adepts and clerics is one of many spread throughout the city, its members studying together and spreading well-being among their fellow citizens. Healing is just another part of the overall system of barter in place within the city. However, members of this house freely cast *healing, restoration, raise dead,* or even *resurrect* for strangers if convinced that a party can ultimately offer something to Io'lokar in return (Diplomacy DC 40).

5. Union of the Spear: This citadel of brass-edged stone is the home of Io'lokar's far-ranging wyvern riders. Spear squadrons spend their time performing aerial reconnaissance in territories that magical observation cannot reach. Members of the order also hunt monsters that threaten nondragon settlements, though they are forced to grudgingly ignore the rogue dragons who too often do the same. Tensions between the dominion lords and Io'lokar run high at all times, and the Io'lokari tread carefully in the Vast.

Service in the Spear is a worthwhile option for combat-oriented characters seeking a place in Io'lokar. PCs who have the Mounted Combat feat and 15 or more ranks in Ride can ask to join a Spear hunting flight as auxiliary troops. Those taking a lead role in slaying a creature of the same Challenge Rating as their level will be invited to join the order. Once within the Spear, characters are trained in the dragonrider prestige class (*Dr* 124).

PCs adventuring in Argonnessen might find themselves befriended (or even saved) by a flight of wyvern riders from the city. Such an encounter is one way to bring a PC party into Io'lokar for the first time.

6. Necropolis Gate: For thirty generations, the people of Io'lokar have lived and died within their city walls. At the end of a nondescript lane, an unlocked black onyx gate opens to a well-worn spiral staircase leading down into the mountain.

Along miles of magically carved corridors stand the burial chambers of the Io'lokari. Their placement follows no pattern; old and new tombs can be found side by side throughout the complex. No map or plan of these caverns exists—the Io'lokari who come here to meditate know where their loved ones lie.

Though few contemporary city folk have ever explored the full extents of the necropolis, it is rumored that its thousand-year-old caverns connect to an even older series of caves where the remains of great dragons are entombed. If this draconic ossuary has any connection to the Warders' placing Io'lokar here, it remains unknown.

7. The Dragon Green: Public parks and green spaces are spread throughout the city. In addition to providing space for quiet reflection and meditation, each park features a shrine to one of the Sovereigns. Folk of the city often choose a number of shrines for meditation, many making a regular progress through the city to pay fealty to each in turn.

The enormous park known as the Dragon Green contains shrines to all fifteen Sovereigns, and is specifically designed to allow dragons to join the city folk in celebrations, lectures, and other public events. Additionally, the Union of the Shield uses the Dragon Green as its primary training grounds, and tournaments of skill are scheduled here weekly. Such fairs are a combination of a typical combat or spellcasting competition (see *Complete Warrior* 130 for suggestions) and a tournament arcane (*Complete Arcane* 178). Lethal force is not only tolerated but actively encouraged in such events, with defeated combatants *raised* in short order.

Characters new to Io'lokar should expect an invitation to a tournament as a means of demonstrating their worth and skill. Refusal is a grave insult, and carries a –10 penalty on Diplomacy checks made within the city. Victory in a tournament is a good way to gain status, however, granting a +5 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy checks within the city for one week.

8. Union of the Shield: This three-story fortress of polished marble marks the headquarters of the military order charged with the defense of the city. Unlike its counterpart Union of the Spear, the Shield is not an order of full-time troops but a citizen militia under the command of some two hundred career officers. In the absence of a soldier class or a standing army, the people of Io'lokar are an army unto themselves.

The Vast is full of dragons who would be pleased to see Io'lokar join Io'vakas in ruin. As a result, the Io'lokari begin military training at a young age, making good use of the base attack bonus granted by their multiclass levels. Io'lokari who do not have martial weapon or armor proficiency from another class often take levels in warrior.

Though crime within Io'lokar is all but unheard of, officers of the Shield keep the peace alongside the Arnaaracaex. Mostly this means monitoring unauthorized use of the high-level magic that suffuses the city, from adolescent casters summoning epic monsters to accidental arcane conflagrations tearing through upscale neighborhoods. In emergencies, citizens and visitors to the city alike are called to service.

9. Lightstorm: This actors' enclave is typical of many in the Sunward—a communal place of study and residence for the bards and illusionists whose work is central to Io'lokar's theatrical traditions (typical bard or illusionist 15/warrior 3). The Lightstorm and other bardic enclaves have a great interest in the lore of the outside world, and a party led by a bard (or PCs willing to pretend that the bard is their leader) can often seek lodging in such enclaves while in the city.

10. The Black Stage: The largest of Io'lokar's amphitheaters is known as the Black Stage for its shadow-magic augmented performances. Music, drama, and oratory are the cornerstones of Io'lokar cultural life, and performances in the Terrace's many theaters are attended by all the folk of the city. Epic dramatic works incorporate illusion and planar magic in their production, while incomparable musical and oratory performances make use of illusion and mild enchantment effects to heighten the audience's perceptions. Lost works of pre-Inspired Sarlona, ancient Xen'drik, and the Dhakaani Empire are often heard here, possibly revealing ancient lore or adventure hooks.

PCs can also seek to perform on the city's stages—the Io'lokari are always hungry for new tales and ballads from distant lands. In addition to performers bartering their efforts for lodging and other favors, a DC 40 Perform check grants a +5 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy checks made within the city for one week.

11. The Gardens: The homes of Io'lokar are universally stocked with wondrous items that produce hearty food and drink, and the chefs and tavernkeepers of the city take such magic beyond the sublime. Nonetheless, the Io'lokari are as passionate about gastronomy as they are all other arts, and city folk supplement their magical fare with the bounty of the gardens. High-level druids use their spellpower to augment permanent magical effects that produce a full harvest each and every day. Produce is available at the public markets from dawn to dusk.

Druids are rarer within the city than other spellcasters, and druid characters can easily find a place in the ranks of the city's gardeners. However, the magic that forces an entire season's growing into a single day involves not only a powerful *plant growth* effect but planar magic tapping into the power of Lamannia, the Twilight Forest. Planar disturbances that open up rifts to Lamannia are a constant risk, and many fiends and elemental lords have attempted to use Io'lokar to establish a foothold in Argonnessen.

12–15. The Colleges: The four great colleges of Io'lokar represent a storehouse of theoretical and historical knowledge greater than any in Khorvaire. The colleges are divided into disciplines defined by the dragons when Io'vakas was first built: the arcane sciences (area 12, including arcane magic, alchemy, and astronomy), the natural sciences (area 13, including divine magic and biology), the conscious sciences (area 14, including psionics and psychology), and the unconscious sciences (area 15, including history, sociology, and dream study). Study of the Prophecy is spread out among the four colleges, since the Prophecy touches all aspects of the world.

Spaced around the Height, the four colleges are multistoried affairs of granite and marble. Each features a huge open courtyard at which morning and afternoon lectures are given by resident sages or dragon scholars visiting the city. All citizens of Io'lokar are welcome to these events.

The City of Knowledge gets few visitors, and its scholars take no chances on useful lore being overlooked. In particular, recent events and developments in Khorvaire, Xen'drik, or Sarlona are of great interest to the Colleges, and PCs who have information to share might find themselves invited to lodge at the Height for an extended time.

PCs might also find themselves in possession of information whose value they do not fully understand. Like the draconic scholars they model, the sages of Io'lokar often draw lines of meaning between apparently unrelated events. The PCs' previous adventures might carry dark portents, and could lead to the Io'lokari requesting the party's aid on an upcoming academic mission.

16. Masters' Hall: These are the council chambers of the Masters—those Io'lokari of highest level who choose to dedicate themselves to the administration of the city. The council is an unelected body whose membership changes month to month—any Io'lokari of 20th character level or higher is free to join.

Council meetings are open to all citizens, but strangers wishing to speak to the council or observe debate are carefully vetted by both interrogation and divination. The dragons of the Warders sometimes observe or offer guidance to the council, with such sessions held on the Dragon Green (area 7). Citizens pack the lawn and line the walls for such special events.

NOTABLE NPCS

Io'lokar is home to some of the highest-level NPCs on Eberron. The following are only a few examples of the characters that might be found here.

Dragana: This well-regarded goblin sage is a legendary scholar, a powerful arcanist, a respected city Master—and a foul impostor. The original Dragana was slain on a scholarly expedition two years before, with the

GUIDES IN IO'LOKAR

As virtually the only nondragons to have explored the interior of Argonnessen, Io'lokari are highly sought after by foreign adventurers as guides. Such characters are often members of the Union of the Spear, usually 15th-level or higher multiclass rangers, rogues, or scouts[CAd]. Io'lokari guides know the territories and habits of the Vast's more dangerous rogues, and are often on good terms with that land's peaceful dragons. Guides can often obtain permission to pass through a good dragon's territory, depending on the PCs' mission and what they are willing to pay the dragon for its trouble.

Finding a guide in the city requires a DC 20 Gather Information check, but PCs must convince such a character that their mission is worthy of his time and of value to the city. Missions of plunder, revenge, or simple self-interest are universally refused (Bluff DC 40 to hide one's motives from an Io'lokari guide).

evil gold dragon who killed her taking her place to pass Io'lokari intelligence to her masters in the Vast. Powerful magic in an amulet the dragon wears prevents *true seeing* from noting her real form. She plans to continue her ruse for as long as possible, trusting that the shock of her eventual discovery will give her the chance she needs to change shape and flee.

Elabenna: Elabenna (elf diviner 19/dragon prophet 5/warrior 1) is an aging soothsayer who served many years as a Master of the city. Since then, she has built up an unofficial network of younger diviners dedicated to reinterpreting the draconic Prophecy as it relates to Io'lokar—or at least as Elabenna believes it does. This cabal has sponsored a number of scholarly expeditions into deepest Argonnessen as a result of Elabenna's visions; three of them never returned. Now, Elabenna seeks foreign adventurers for her schemes. Such PCs can effectively set their own price in divination spells cast by Elabenna as payment for such a mission.

Honar: This captain in the Spear (fighter 12/ranger 5/dragonrider^{Dr} 5) is one of the best wyvern riders in the city. He is commonly sought out as a guide by foreign adventurers—he has a reputation in the Freeward taverns for being more easily convinced than most that a party's mission might have some benefit for the city. In truth, Honar simply loves the thrill of adventuring for its own sake, and his recklessness has gotten him (and the parties who hire him) into trouble on more than one occasion.

Izzardo: A goblin war mage who stayed loyal to House Deneith after the Darguun uprising of 969 YK, Izzardo (goblin wizard 12/warrior 5) was in the Cyran village transported to Argonnessen before the Day of Mourning. Found wandering the Vast by a Spear flight, he was brought to Io'lokar and has lived here since. Though he has fully embraced the philosophy of Io'lokar, Izzardo covets portable wealth (usually gems and jewelry) that he *greater teleports* back home to his extended family in Darguun. Unlike most of the city's working spellcasters, he is happy to create items or cast spells for hire. He spends much time in the Freeward taverns seeking foreign parties with which to do circumspect business.

K'Naatha: This dour stone giant (elder stone giant sorcerer 8/paladin 10) is the captain of the Arnaaracaex. K'Naatha is an imposing figure, striding through the city in mithral chainmail, his greatsword slung across his shoulders. More than six hundred years old, K'Naatha was a young sergeant of the Arnaaracaex during the bloody Battle of Arnaarlasha's Fall. In the aftermath, he and his comrades claimed the skulls of the rogues that had fallen to their blades. Today, those Moontower skulls remain a grim warning to any who would threaten this place and its people.

As the oldest resident of the city, K'Naatha is an exceptional source of lore from Io'lokar's middle period. He is also the only nondragon who knows Arnaarlasha's and the Warders' true motives for creating Io'vakas and Io'lokar after it, a secret passed down by his father. What those motives might be rests with the DM.

Nalyna: The aged Nalyna (half-elf paladin 12/fighter 14/wizard 3) led the Union of the Shield for half his life before retiring to write a definitive encyclopedia of combat styles. He is greatly interested in meeting characters who have exotic combat-oriented prestige classes, and such PCs can usually lodge in his palatial Terrace apartments for as long as they are in the city. To those he judges trustworthy, Nalyna confides a deep secret—his plan to create a covert army of dragonslayers within the city. He has seen too many near attacks from the Vast over the years, and believes that the Io'lokari must take the fight to the rogues before it is too late.

Sura: Like many of her fellow Io'lokari, Sura (expert 8/sorcerer 4) sought a new life after fleeing a tyrant dominion lord in the Vast. She is a low-level researcher at the College of Arcane Sciences, but her work there is more than it appears. Sura is a yuan-ti pureblood, kin to the serpent folk that have secretly laired in the ruins of Io'vakas since that city's fall. For years, she has relayed powerful arcane lore to her sinister serpent cult. What those leaders do with Sura's secrets is as yet unknown.

Thinrukidis: The master of the Black Stage (area 10) is Thinrukidis (gnome bard 12/wizard 5/seeker of the song^{CAr} 5). Though he is one of the highest-level arcanists in the city, Thinrukidis's prowess with illusion conceals a newfound fascination for the forbidden arts of necromancy. As elsewhere in Argonnessen, active practice of the dark art is prohibited in Io'lokar, and the city Masters have no desire to antagonize the Conclave on this matter. Thinrukidis has ties to the necromantic cabal of the Shadowmasters, and much of their lore is hidden in the private libraries of the gnome's Sunward apartments, out of sight of draconic agents.

Veoddyn: This retired human expert arrived in the city only four years ago, and he now spends his days walking the streets and engaging city folk and strangers alike in polite conversation. Though Veoddyn never speaks of his past life, the aged Khorvairian is actually an exile who has a dark secret. The DM should choose a significant campaign-hook back story to play off Veoddyn's true identity—a notorious war criminal long thought dead, a Cannith artificer who knows what happened on the Day of Mourning, or perhaps even the real Kaius III.

TOTEM BEACH

On the rocky northern shore of Argonnessen, an immense stretch of coarse beach provides a buffer between the churning sea and the rest of the continent. Seren barbarians, worshipers of the dragons of Argonnessen, whom they consider gods, live and hunt among the islands off the coastline, keeping watch for intruders. Monolithic stone dragon heads stand on Totem Beach, fixing their fierce, frozen gazes on all who come near.

APPROACH

Although the immense beach covers more than two thousand miles, only limited areas are suitable for ship landings; jagged rocks and treacherous terrain cover the remainder of area.

Dozens of small islands dot the waters of the Dragonsreach Sea, and sailors must navigate through them to reach Totem Beach. The largest of these land masses, Seren, is home to the majority of the barbarians in the area. Small settlements exist on other islands in the Dragonsreach, though.

Successfully navigating the reef-studded waters of the Dragonsreach requires a DC 22 Profession (sailor) check. Failure by 4 or less means the ship has gone off course, caught in a tide, and been shunted back into the sea. Failure by 5–9 means the ship has run against an island or reef and must be freed (a process taking 1d4+1 hours) before travel can continue. Failure by 10 or more means the ship crashes or capsizes.

FEATURES

The turgid waters of the Dragonsreach surge against a predominantly rocky coastline. In various areas, stretches of sandy beach sprawl back to a dense wall of trees. Enormous stone dragon heads, each over 10 feet tall, are found on the sandy areas and appear less frequently along the rocky zones. Their imperious gaze seems to stare across the water. Beyond Totem Beach, a dense jungle appears impenetrable. Looming over all are the Great Barrier Mountains farther inland.

Characters can walk easily on the sandy beaches, but the surrounding terrain is jagged and dangerous. It counts as difficult terrain; in addition, the sharp rocks shred nonmagical footwear after only a few minutes of walking. A natural armor bonus, magic boots, or a *magic vestments* spell protects a character's feet. Otherwise, anyone walking on a rocky area of Totem Beach takes 1d4 points of damage per round and has his base speed reduced by half.

The waters surrounding Totem Beach are rarely calm. A DC 15 Swim check successfully navigates these rough swells.

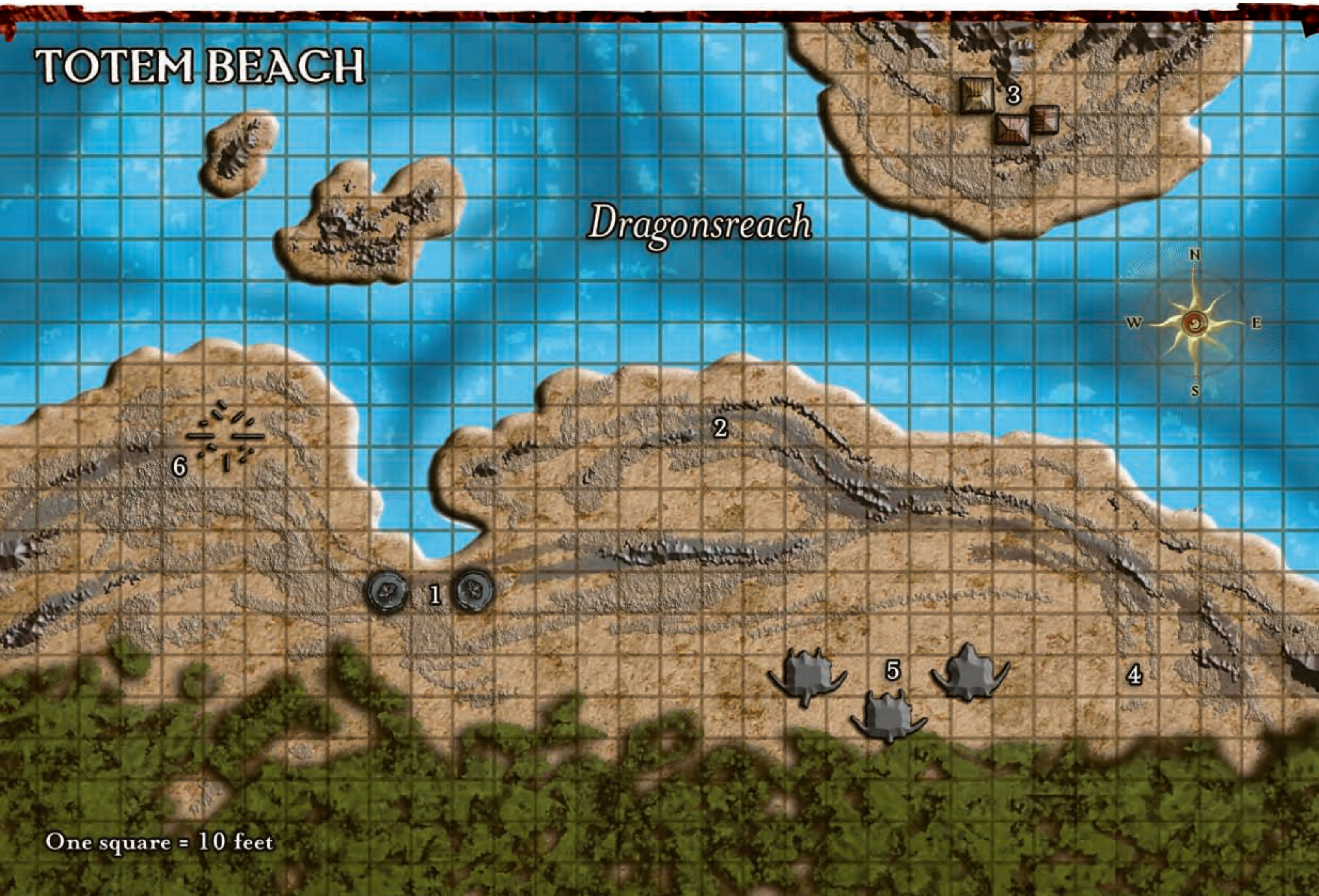
Savage Seren Totem Guardians, elite defenders of Totem Beach and the Great Barrier of Argonnessen, are stationed on the sandy beaches and regularly patrol the rocky coastline. They have been tasked with guarding the monoliths, and they would gladly die serving their gods' will.

KEYED LOCATIONS

Several dozen sandy, accessible areas are sprinkled along the breadth of Totem Beach. The mapped area presented, and the features detailed below, are but one example of these approachable sections.

1. Totemic Gateway: The Serens did not carve the giant stone dragon heads. They did, however, carve these two wooden poles. Each pole, formed from a single tree trunk, stands 12 feet high and displays crude carvings of dragon faces. Though they were painted in bright colors originally, exposure to wind, sand, and water have faded the colors to a muddy brown.

Long-dead Seren shamans infused this totemic gateway with a strange power. Any creature within a



180-foot radius is subject to a frightful presence effect as if it were in the presence of a charging dragon. Creatures with 20 HD or fewer must make a DC 23 Will save or become shaken for 4d6 rounds. Creatures with 4 HD or fewer who fail their saves become panicked for 4d6 rounds. A successful save renders a creature immune to this ability for the next 24 hours. The Totem Guardians who protect this area have developed an immunity to this ability over time.

2. Watchtower: The Guardians use this crude wooden tower to keep watch over the beach. It also serves as a mooring point for longboats.

Stacked firewood sits atop the watchtower. If a scout sees strangers on the beach or horizon, he lights the firewood to alert his comrades. Since all Serens, including Totem Guardians, thirst for glorious battle, the watchers sometimes forget to extinguish the signal fire and return only after the threat is neutralized. In such cases, they might find the watchtower has burned to cinders. Fortunately, lumber is abundant, and the guardians don't mind rebuilding the watchtower time and time again.

3. Settlement: The nearest island to this stretch of beach, a mere 50 feet offshore, measures a mile across and hosts a handful of wooden huts. Stacked head-sized stones form a defensive northern wall.

This settlement houses several Totem Guardians and their families. Thirty-two barbarians live on this island, and they patrol the surrounding areas in teams of six. This settlement is the home of the barbarian queen Una Wyrmguard (page 66).

4. Totems: This sand-covered, easily traveled section is where the Totem Guardians are often found. The wild stretches of rocky terrain to the east and west are kept watch over, but few spend long periods of time in such inhospitable terrain. Dragons sometimes visit Totem Beach settlements, hunt and explore this section of the coast, or gather followers at various places along Totem Beach. The hostile nature of the rocky terrain poses no harm to dragons.

5. Dragon Monoliths: No one knows who created the giant stone dragon heads that watch the beach. A DC 20 Knowledge (architecture and engineering) reveals that they are at least ten thousand years old and solid granite. A DC 25 Knowledge (architecture and engineering) check allows a character to identify distinctive sculpting techniques also utilized in several ruins on Xen'drik.

6. Calendar: To the untrained eye, the collection of rocks, dried seaweed, and bent logs at one end of the beach seems a jumble of worthless flotsam. In reality, the Totem Guardians chose each rock and stick to represent an important event in their lives. The largest rocks signify visits from, or sightings of, dragons, while smaller items indicate births, deaths, marriages, and important rituals.

A character can make a DC 30 Decipher Script check to glean the significance of the calendar and discern that the large rocks represent the important encounters. She can fit those encounters into the standard Khorvairian calendar with a few hours' work. A character on friendly terms with the Totem Guardians need make only a DC 25 Decipher Script check to unlock the calendar's secrets. Or the Seren might indicate which items represent which events.

TOTEM BEACH ENCOUNTERS

(Check 1/hour, 8% chance)

d%	Encounter	EL
01–15	1d4 chuuls (*MM* 35)	7–11
16–30	2 10th-level Totem Guardian scouts (*DMG* 122)	12
31–45	Mature adult brass dragon (*MM* 79)	15
46–60	Dragon eel (*MM3* 44)	11
61–75	Adult green dragon (*MM* 74)	13
76–90	1 orc war howler plus 2d4 orc berserkers (*MM4* 114)	7–10
91–100	Totem Guardian strike force (3 10th-level barbarians, 1 10th-level sorcerer, and 1 10th-level cleric, *DMG* 112, 115, 125), led by Una Wyrmguard (page 66)	16

VALE OF THE FALLEN RAJAH

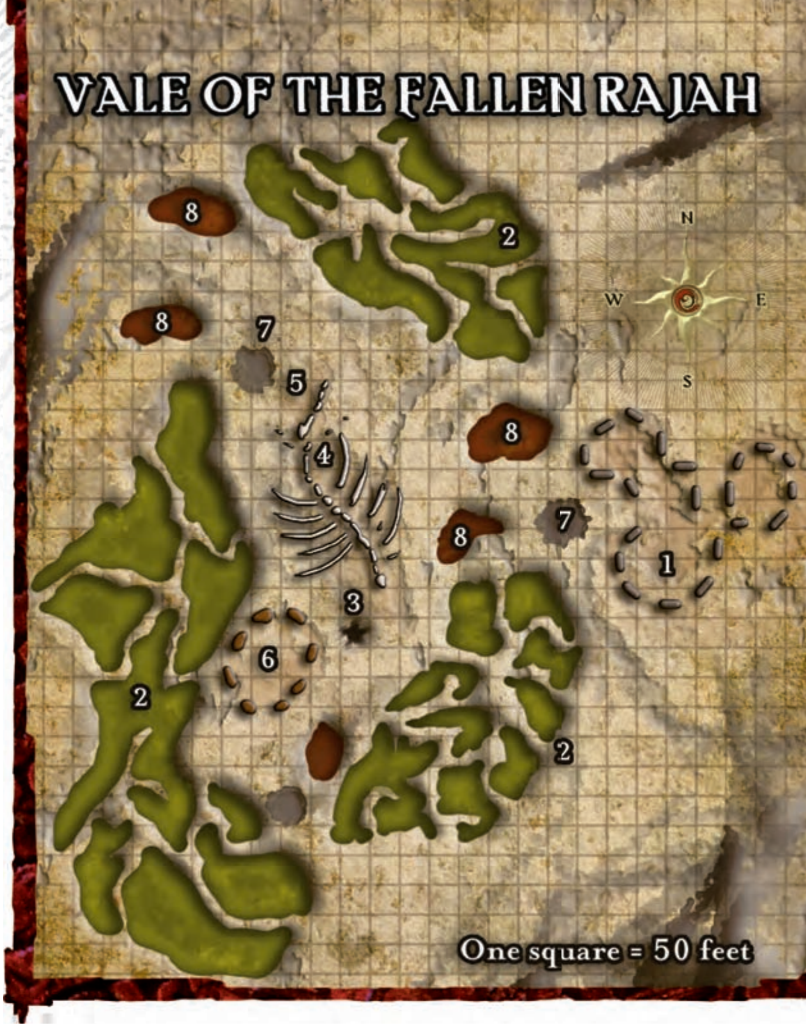
Both sides suffered innumerable casualties in the ancient war against the rakshasa overlords. In one epic battle, a colossal two-headed tiger-fiend named Yad-Raghesh was laid low south of the Dragon Spine. The rajah assaulted Argonnessen on a seemingly pointless rampage, leaving a swath of destruction in his wake. It took an entire battalion of the Light to fell him. Yad-Raghesh was the first rajah slain in the great war, and his destruction was hailed as a grand victory. But elder Eyes of Chronepsis pondered the rajah's suicidal attack uneasily, and their momentary surprise at his death was followed with wary concern. Their fears came home to roost centuries later when the land where Yad-Raghesh fell rotted away and a host of fiends spawned from the desolate stretch of corrupted earth. Since then, the Vale of the Fallen Rajah has been a thorn in the dragons' side, where malignancy grows from foul roots and taints the earth and sky with evil.

At present, the Vale is lair to the Talons of Tiamat and the countless fiends huddling in their fallen rajah's dark shadow. The Light of Siberys patrols the perimeter incessantly doing their best to curb the spread of the Vale's seeping rot. Still the darkness encroaches, gaining inches every year. Unless powerful magic is developed to contain it, it will eventually cover the face of Argonnessen.

APPROACH

Desolate but natural desert suddenly gives way to a blood-soaked landscape of dark, corrupted earth. The first obstacle to braving the Vale is the Light of Siberys. The Light allows no entry, because most who venture within return twisted and possessed by fiends. The soldiers patrolling the no-man's-land around the Vale are under orders to annihilate any living being that crosses their path, fiend or otherwise.

The rajah's fall shook the earth, and now a bleak wasteland riddled with dark canyons and sulfur-spewing caves lies where his blood desecrated the soil. The scarred ribs of Yad-Raghesh, twisted spires of pure evil, reach high into the black-clouded sky above.



Features

The land here seeps hate. Those who trespass within the Vale find themselves filled with rage over the slightest affront and must make a DC 25 Will save to resist the urge to attack anyone who baits, insults, or otherwise offends them, even if the offense was offered in jest. In addition, the corrupting power of Yad-Raghesh erodes the morals of any who stay among his remains. Every day spent in the Vale adjusts a creature's alignment one step toward chaotic evil (Will DC 30 negates). Also, the canyons betray travelers, shifting to befuddle attempts to navigate them. All Survival checks attempted in the Vale take a –10 penalty.

By far the most insidious threat of the Vale, and the primary concern of the Light of Siberys, is the place's strange power over memory. Every day, a creature that has seen the Vale must make a DC 30 Will save or forget everything it knows of the place, even the location's very existence. This curse allows bands of fiends to wander out of the Vale uncontested as patrols of the Light simply forget their mission and find themselves faced with a sprawling, unfamiliar wasteland. Patrols are constantly rotated to avoid lapses in containment, but fiends invariably escape, and the Vale continues to encroach upon the surrounding countryside.

KEYED LOCATIONS

The following features correspond to numbered areas on the map.

1. Chronicle of the Damned: On the edge of the Vale, the Light of Siberys erected a mournful monument of standing stones as a testament to the dire threat posed by this tainted wasteland. A single scale from each dragon corrupted by the Vale (and summarily executed) is embedded in the face of one of these stones. The Chronicle began as a single standing stone, but now encompasses a henge of over fifty menhirs covered top to bottom with scales of every hue.

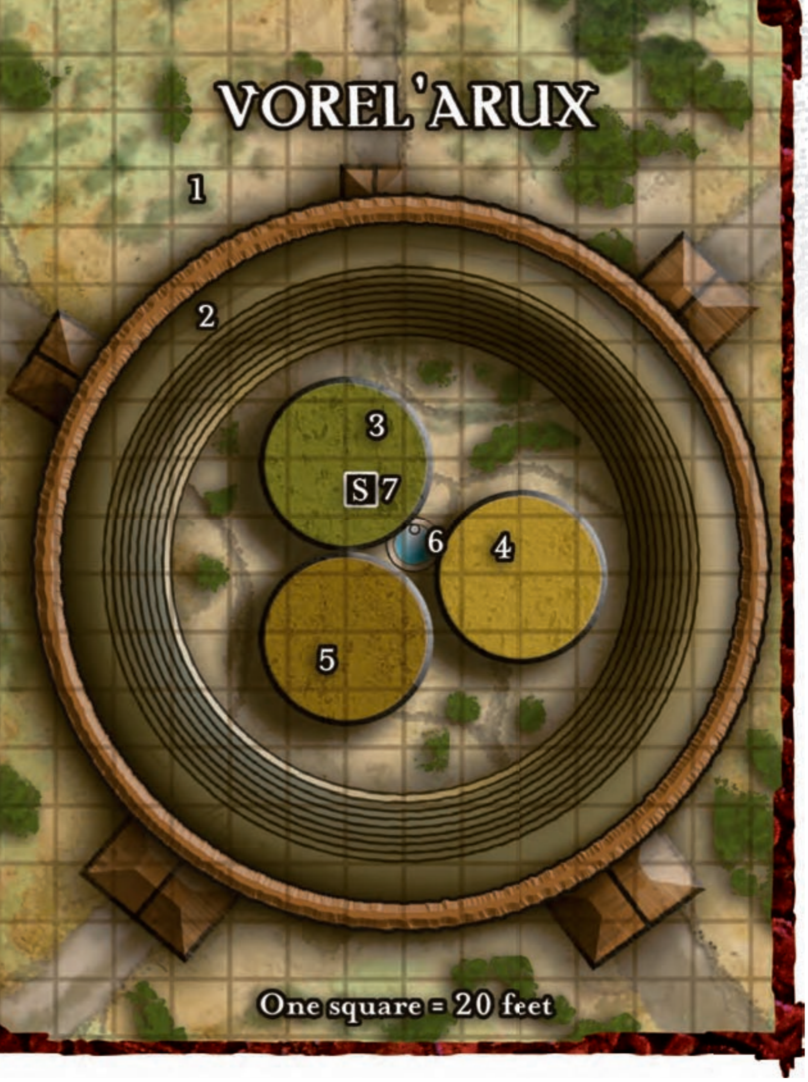
2. Canyon of Entrails: These constantly writhing canyons are slick with bile and mucus and the reek of rot. Stealthy patrols of babau demons led by naztharune rakshasas (*MM3* 136) beset anyone who enters here. Random sinkholes of acidic bile claim many travelers as well. A DC 30 Search or Survival check allows a creature to detect these hazards. A DC 25 Reflex save is necessary to avoid an undetected pit. If a creature falls into a sinkhole, a DC 25 Climb check extricates it from the slick bile (an ally can haul it out with a DC 20 Strength check, but if the attempt fails, the ally plunges in as well). Anyone who spills into these caustic pits takes 5d6 points of acid damage in the first round and is submerged in the second round (taking 20d6 points of acid damage).

3. Womb of Yad-Raghesh: This foul crevice, ever shrouded in supernatural darkness, is where the fallen rajah's sinister energies pulse strongest. Here the Talons of Tiamat place eggs (their own, or those stolen from other dragons) to be tainted with Yad-Raghesh's unholy power. Eggs hatched in this womb nearly always yield spawn of Tiamat (*MM4* 128) or abishai (*FC2* 108). On occasion these eggs receive a particularly dark blessing and spawn a half-fiend dragon. A rakshasa who grovels especially well before the Talons of Tiamat is honored in a dark rite during which it feeds upon a ripe dragon's egg in the depths of the Womb. If its dark soul proves worthy, it is immediately transformed into a half-dragon (apply the template normally) and becomes a great emissary between the fiends and the Talons. If it proves too weak, a spawn of Tiamat tears itself out from the unlucky fiend's gizzard.

4. Ribs of the Rajah: Burned black, these spars of bone rise high into the dark clouds above. They twist and shift, the sound of their grinding echoing as far away as Seren on still nights. Legions of fiends crouch in the shadow of the ribs, paying homage to their fallen rajah as they train to avenge his demise. Flights of vrocks patrol the skies above, and Gargantuan bebiliths crawl the carrion floor culling weaker fiends to galvanize Yad-Raghesh's demon army.

5. Tiger's Spine: This mile-long line of bone-white rock is riddled with tiny caverns. The Spine is infested with thousands of imps and quasits that constantly feud for dominance. Those that prove more sinister graduate to higher fiendish forms and join the baleful legions at the Ribs. Currently a scheming imp sorcerer named Grazzdalt reigns supreme in the Spine—he giddily dreams of someday becoming a cruel bone devil enforcer.

6. Festering Heart: At the heart of the Vale lies the Talons' redoubt. Here gather titanic evil dragons who have turned their backs on their own kind to slavishly bow to the Lords of Dust. Schemes to bring Argonnessen down into Khyber and corrupt the



mightiest Eyes of Chronepsis are hatched in this dark place. The fallen rajah's foul spirit places dread wards against scrying here. Any creature that attempts to remote view Festering Heart must immediately make a DC 40 Will save or instantly have its alignment warped to chaotic evil.

7. Motes of Dust: Only recently the scouts of the Light discerned these dire threats. Hovering out of sight, several strange extraplanar pockets conceal squadrons of rakshasa troops and demon support fighters. These motes are nearly undetectable demiplanar phenomena, and the Light does not even know how many exist (the ones marked on the map are the only motes known of). Worse yet, many dragons fear that, as the Vale's dark power grows, these extradimensional motes could gain the ability to move, secreting elite units of fiends to any vulnerable strike point on Eberron.

8. Demon Cysts: These giant craters are filled with sloshing hell-scum and the putrescent soul-stuff serving as a base for lesser demonspawn. A sea of a thousand half-formed lemures and larval dretches churns here. Bearded and chain devils tirelessly cultivate the fledgling fiends under the cruel watch of a barbed devil taskmaster named Haath-Krueg. Surgical strikes by Soldiers of the Light occasionally obliterate these cesspools of evil, but they quickly regrow.

VALE OF THE FALLEN RAJAH ENCOUNTERS

(Check 1/hour, 5% chance)

d%	Encounter	EL
01–15	Evil adult gold dragon (*MM* 85)	16
16–30	Hellfire engine (*FCII* 119)	19
31–45	1d4 blackstone gigants (*FF* 21)	18–22
46–60	Pit fiend and 4d6 rakshasas (*MM* 57, 211)	20–22
61–75	Hellfire wyrm (*MM2* 125)	26
76–90	1d4 balors and 3d8 vrocks (*MM* 40, 48)	20–24
91–100	2d6 very old red dragons (*MM* 77)	23–28

VOREL'ARUX

The center of the Tapestry is Vorel'arux, the Valley of Beauty. In this haven of intelligence and free thought, dragons of all colors intermix to share their opinions and knowledge. Vorel'arux is aesthetically pleasing, but its true beauty comes from its community of cooperation and tolerance.

APPROACH

Traveling to the Valley of Beauty requires a long trip through dragon lands. Approaching strangers are ordered to retreat immediately, and receive only one warning. Tapestry members aren't bloodthirsty creatures, but they recognize the importance of protecting their sanctuary.

A 60-foot-tall white stone wall circles Vorel'arux. Dragons fly over the wall with ease, but landbound creatures find it contains no doors or openings of any kind. The structure is 8 feet thick, has hardness 8; each 10-by-10-foot section has 1,440 hit points.

Dragons of all colors flit about; the sun reflects off their scales, bouncing multicolored patches onto the wall and buildings of Vorel'arux.

FEATURES

Vorel'arux is almost always inhabited by at least a dozen dragons, and security concerns sometimes seem pointless. Still, its inhabitants realize that danger often comes in a manner and at a time least expected. One or two dragons are assigned to patrol the city and keep watch for any threats.

Spellcasting dragons laid powerful wards on Vorel'arux, protecting it from divination attempts. All areas in Vorel'arux fall under the protection of a *missing chamber* lair ward (*Dr* 85). A spellcaster attempting to use divination or detection spells or magic items on anyone or anything inside Vorel'arux must make a DC 16 caster level check, or the attempt fails. Many sections are also warded with *secure cavern* (no one can use spells that detect, influence, or read emotions or thoughts, including *wish* and *miracle*, and any scry attempt that scans the area does not work) and *inscriptions of privacy* (anyone scanning the area causes it to glow softly; anyone scried upon in the area can attempt an opposed caster level check to receive an immediate mental image of the scrier, along with a sense of his direction and distance, accurate to within 1/10 of the distance).

KEYED LOCATIONS

The following features correspond to numbered areas on the map.

1. Entresol: Dragons on their way to an event in Vorel'arux sometimes arrive early to socialize with neighbors or start informal debates. The entresol surrounding Vorel'arux proper functions as a meeting place and lounge.

This sloped area is covered in grass. Black dragons cultivate several strains of sorrel and clover amid the grass, and a pleasant scent always wafts in the air. Hollows in the grass form comfortable nests in which dragons can recline. Crushed gravel lines a few of these nests for dragons who prefer the texture—not identical to that of a bed of coins, but enjoyable nonetheless.

At intervals around the walls, large silk awnings hang from wooden frameworks, providing shade for members on particularly warm days.

2. The Stadium: The Valley of Beauty takes its name not only from its aesthetics, but its conical shape. Circular rows of roosts surround the main floor of Vorel'arux. Amid flowering bushes and exotic trees, smooth hollows and carved wooden perches await draconic inhabitants.

A dragon anticipating a long evening might bring an assortment of gems and coins in a *bag of holding* to spread out in one of the hollows and form a comfortable seat. A Tapestry member would never think of stealing from another member, and it's considered poor manners to evaluate another's hoard during these events.

Some dragons prefer to sit or stand, making it easier to gesture and emphasize their comments. For these individuals, wooden platforms contain deep, curving ridges suitable for sinking claws into.

3. The Forum: Vorel'arux's floor holds three raised stages, each carved from imported densewood. The northern stage is called the Forum, and dragons use it to argue their points in debate or deliver lectures on theology, philosophy, politics, and many other subjects.

When a particularly important issue arises, members of the Tapestry shut down the other two stages and open the Forum to all. Each Tapestry member takes a turn delivering his opinion on the stage, if he wishes to, and the audience asks questions to clarify the issue.

A *secure cavern* ward (*Dr* 85) cloaks the Forum stage. Tapestry members consider it important that every member be allowed to speak his mind without fear of magical interference.

4. The Auditorium: Dragons possessed of talent in the performing arts practice their craft here. Singers, dancers, orators, and actors have all performed in the Auditorium to the delight of their draconic audience. By custom, only the most talented dragons perform in the Auditorium, but if an amateur does perform, or a performance goes badly, the audience reacts with polite applause. Catcalling and booing is considered extremely rude and unbefitting of Tapestry members.

An auditory enhancement allows the sound of performances in the Auditorium to clearly reach nearby spectators without interfering in Forum debates.

5. The Gallery: The third stage in Vorel'arux is a platform for silent creation. Dragon sculptors, painters, and writers can reserve the gallery to create in public. Some Tapestry members find it soothing and intriguing to watch others create. Some bring their own projects and work from the Stadium while they watch. The Gallery is a silent area, but one filled with great effort and achievement.

6. Fountain: In the center of Vorel'arux, positioned between the three stages, stands a magnificent fountain. Crafted of rose marble and yellow glass, the fountain rises almost twelve feet tall and spreads out forty feet in diameter. Water cascades down in multiple layers, over engravings of dragons, stars, and arcane runes, and spills into a large pool on the lowest level.

The water functions as a *greater pool of scrying* (*Dr* 85). Members of the Tapestry use the pool to gather information for discussions and to monitor their allies (such as Chamber agents) on missions elsewhere in the world. The user can scry on others using this pool just like the standard *scrying* spell. Spellcasters can cast certain spells through the pool at objects or creatures they are scrying upon, as the *greater scrying* spell.

7. Archives: Hidden beneath the Forum stage is a preservation chamber. Countless scrolls, tomes, and records fill the shelf-covered walls. Here, members of the Tapestry store their collective knowledge and keep records of their activities.

Tapestry members trust each other to borrow materials only for a short time, and to replace borrowed items promptly. However, by mutual agreement, powerful spellcasters laid a dweomer on the hidden door that requires two people to open the door simultaneously; otherwise, it remains closed.

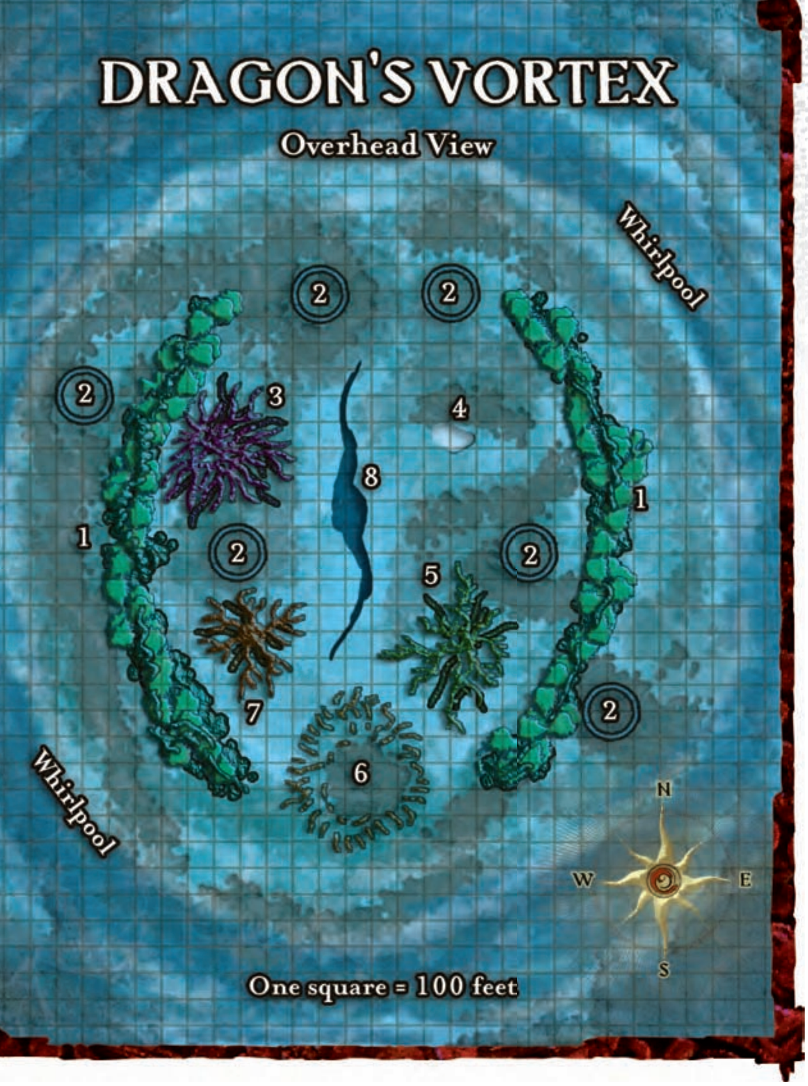
A Tapestry member who comes across valuable knowledge is expected to store it here for the betterment of all instead of adding it to her lair.

VOREL'ARUX ENCOUNTERS

Most dragons come to Vorel'arux for a specific reason, so they aren't eager to interact with visitors. But some younger dragons visiting the Valley of Beauty are more curious and will challenge those they feel don't belong within the Tapestry. The table below reflects interactions with those younger dragons. Any combat (or threat of same) will soon draw the attention of the older dragons assigned to patrol Vorel'arux.

(Check 1/hour, 12% chance)

d%	Encounter	EL
01–15	Vultsubai, young brass dragon (*Dr* 216)	6
16–30	Young adult black dragon (*MM* 72)	9
31–45	Young white dragon (*MM* 78)	4
46–60	Rhindani, very young copper dragon (*Dr* 233)	5
61–75	Juvenile bronze dragon (*MM* 82)	9
76–90	Karaglen, very young silver dragon (*Dr* 262)	5
91–100	Kalryni, young blue dragon bard 8 (page 63)	12



VORTEX

A maelstrom of awesome power rages eternal in the center of the Dragonreach Sea, north of Argonnessen. Most sea captains call her the Dragon's Mistress, but a few know the truth about this mighty tempest. Far below her turbulent waters, poised between Seren and the hostile shores of Aerenal, lies the dragons' underwater stronghold—the Vortex.

The Eyes of Chronepsis see all, know all. They watch every corner of Eberron, including the murky depths of the ocean floor. Aboleths and other allies of the Lords of Dust lurk in the lightless depths, hatching insidious schemes to restore their dark masters. In the Vortex, the Eyes remain vigilant against these fiendish aquatic threats. Also, within this sheltered stronghold Soldiers of the Light prepare to stage their first strike on the Undying Court, if old hostilities commence anew. Surrounded by a magical ring of violently spinning currents and bastions of jagged coral, the dragons watch and wait.

APPROACH

Even the most seaworthy of vessels is splintered by the mighty storm raging above the Vortex. Once sundered of their transport, visitors must be able to withstand crushing pressure and frigid cold, not to mention the absence of air. These natural obstacles aside, encroachers must also contend with the violent whirl of frothing water circling the stronghold. Swimmers must make a DC 30 Swim check or be dragged down and dashed across walls of razor coral, taking 10d6 points of slashing damage and running the risk of drowning as they are held fast in the whirlpool's crushing grasp (a DC 30 Reflex save can be made every round to escape).

Once travelers are through the storm, the silence of the deep is broken by the rush of mighty currents. A frothing wall of bubbles and twisting eddies roils. Beyond, a vast forest of kelp and rolling honeycombs of iridescent purple and white coral spreads before the visitor. Farther on, titanic ramparts of dragon turtle shells jut from the ocean floor like something from a naiad's dream. Dragons, like great leviathans, flit between majestic towers of coral surrounding a yawning crevice descending deep into the heart of the ocean floor.

FEATURES

The coral in the fields and structures of the Vortex sheds a hypnotic purple glow that causes lesser creatures to fall into a trance and sink to the ocean floor. A DC 25 Will save negates the effect; dragons and dragonblood creatures are immune. Navigating the coral tunnels and valleys is dangerous as sudden shifts in current buffet Medium or smaller swimmers against jagged walls (DC 20 Swim check every round or take 5d6 points of slashing damage). The crushing pressure of the sea at the depth of this stronghold forces Large or smaller nonaquatic creatures to make a DC 25 Fortitude save every 10 minutes or take 2d6 points of nonlethal damage.

KEYED LOCATIONS

The following features correspond to numbered areas on the map.

1. Turtleback Palisade: A circle of over twenty gargantuan dragon turtle shells, each studded with dragonshards, creates a massive defensive wall around the inner enclave of the Vortex. Elder water elementals reside in these hollowed shells under orders to attack any nondragons who approach. Additionally, these elementals can bind to the turtle shells, transforming them into roving sea carriers capable of housing hundreds of minions such as subjugated merfolk, locathahs, or sahuagin.

2. Coral Watchtowers: Dragons keep watch over the inner reach of the Vortex from these structures. The towers are infused with powerful transmutation magic and shift position at the command of the watchers within.

3. Den of Sea's Shadows: This sprawling complex of dark purple coral is the lair of the Sea's Shadows, an elite unit of the Light of Siberys. Black dragons to the last, the Shadows stealthily roam the ocean floor when not resting here, vigilant for any sign of fiendish threat, Xoriat invasion, or other hostile force. Many of the Shadows are children of Eberron and have druid levels, allowing them to prowl the ocean depths in the innocuous form of a school of fish, giant squids, or sharks. The Shadows are currently commanded by

Radiance Avodrast, a great wyrm black dragon druid 12/rogue 11.

4. Well of Mirrors: This cavern of alabaster coral contains a magical, air-filled hexagonal chamber with towering walls of shimmering water on all six sides. Each wavering facet of the room shows the viewer a different underwater locale. The walls continuously scry on these remote oceanic vistas, some as far away as the Bitter Sea, the White Sea, or the Sea of Lost Souls. Here the Eyes of Chronepsis keep their vigil, prepared to strike down any threat that emerges from the deep. An enormous opaque dragonshard in the center of the room controls the six scrying surfaces. Any speaker of Draconic can command the shard to transform one of the six walls into a two-way portal (though no air or water passes through). The portal remains open for 1 hour once activated. The current Watcher here is Lovarasinth, a great wyrm gold dragon dispassionate watcher of Chronepsis$^{\text{Dr}}$ 8.

5. Feeding Grounds: Locathah thralls of the dragons tend massive schools of fish and dolphins here among sprawling forests of kelp. The animals serve as provisions in case the Vortex should ever fall under siege. Powerful magic is used in the breeding of these sea creatures and, when eaten, different types grant curing, restoration, or other benefits (as potions of various levels). Culinary masters the world over seek these ensorcelled fish for their masterpiece dishes, and will pay any adventurer dearly to make off with some.

6. Bronze Brigade's Training Ground: This large flat shelf of coral is where an elite unit of bronze dragon Soldiers of the Light engages in constant wargames. Their eventual mission is to launch a devastating first strike against the Undying Court. The current leader, Radiant Flame Kelrozenatheen (wyrm bronze dragon paladin 14), trains the Brigade day and night with only the occasional break to feast on the speckled dolphins of the feeding grounds. The coral shelf where they fight their mock battles is surrounded by a great crystal dome several feet thick. The dome oscillates, and when open, the crystal is housed in large slits dug into the coral below. When closed, the dome magically converts the water inside it to fresh air allowing the Brigade to train as if on land. In addition, potent illusionary spells generate myriad scenarios including terrain, legions of Undying soldiers, and other variables involved in a full scale assault on Aerenal.

7. Krakenheart Council: This large circular chamber features walls woven of webbed crimson coral. Here, dragons entreat with other mighty denizens of the sea. Kraken kings, leviathans (*MM2* 139), sea drake lords (*FF* 147) and other mighty ocean dwellers convene with the Eyes here to settle disputes, trade information on the ever-changing ocean floor, and hold war councils to deal with common threats. The unfathomable intrigue of unearthly intelligences that transpires here leaves most mortals utterly befuddled. Curbing the subtle machinations of these alien rulers of the deep is a central part of the dragons' mission to safeguard the world beneath the waves.

8. Darkreach Crevice: This gaping wound in the ocean floor reaches deep into the festering heart of Khyber. Under-ocean tunnels connect to innumerable strongholds of the Lords of Dust, and the Soldiers of the Light use this crevice to stage daring underground assaults against these enclaves of evil. A contingent of gold dragons stands guard around the crevice at all times, lest the agents of Khyber retaliate.

VORTEX ENCOUNTERS

(Check 1/hour, 8% chance)

d%	Encounter	EL
01–15	1d4 kraken ambassadors (*MM* 162)	12–16
16–30	4d6 juvenile bronze dragon recruits (*MM* 82)	13–18
31–45	1d6 aboleth mage invaders (*MM* 8)	17–22
46–60	1d6 colossal monstrous crabs (*Sto* 142)	13–18
61–75	Great wyrm black dragon (*MM* 70)	22
76–90	2d6 adult gold dragons (*MM* 84)	18–23
91–100	2d4 sea drakes (*FF* 147)	17–21

ARGONNESSEN ENCOUNTERS

ARSTYVRAX (EL 25)

The practice of necromancy is forbidden among the dragons of Argonnessen, but Arstyvrax is one of this land's foremost practitioners of the dark art. He is a member of the Shadowmasters—a cabal of a dozen necromancer dragons who share lore and maintain secret libraries scattered across the Vast.

Like most Argonnessen dragons, the Shadowmasters share a steadfast enmity for the Undying Court of Aerenal. Unlike their so-called elders in the Conclave, however, these dragon necromancers believe that understanding the power of the Shadow is the only way to ultimately prevail against the Aereni and their undying lords. What not even the other Shadowmasters suspect is that Arstyvrax has a very different purpose to his studies. He is secretly a vampiric dragon (*Dr* 195) who has ties to the Blood of Vol.

Arstyvrax joined the ranks of the undead some two hundred years past. Already an initiate into the necromantic arts, he was doing fieldwork in Xen'drik when he fell to a vampiric wyrm's assault. That foul undead was the servant of a Blood of Vol high priest operating secretly out of Stormreach. In his tortured mental state, Arstyvrax quickly latched onto the teachings of the cult as a means to accept and justify his horrid transformation.

ARSTYVRAX CR 25

Male vampiric old black dragon necromancer 14
LE Huge undead
Init +7; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., keen senses; Listen +33, Spot +33
Aura frightful presence (240 ft., DC 33)
Languages Common, Draconic, Elven, Giant, Mabran, Undercommon

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AC 41, touch 11, flat-footed 38; Dodge (2 size, +3 Dex, +4 armor, +26 natural)
hp 353 (39 HD); fast healing 5; **DR** 10/magic
Immune acid, paralysis, sleep; undead immunities
Resist cold 20, electricity 20, +4 turn resistance; **SR** 22
Fort +21, **Ref** +26, **Will** +24
Weakness vampiric weaknesses

Speed 60 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor), swim 60 ft.; Flyby Attack, Wingover
Melee bite +41 (2d8+11) and
2 claws +40 each (2d6+5) and
2 wings +39 each (1d8+5) and
tail slap +39 (2d6+16)
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (15 ft. with bite)
Base Atk +32; **Grp** +51
Atk Options Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Improved Snatch, Power Attack, Tail Constrict, energy drain, magic strike
Special Actions blood drain, breath weapon, *charm*, *corrupt water*, crush 2d8+16 (DC 29), *darkness*, dominating gaze
Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 7th):
3rd (5/day)—*dispel magic*, *protection from energy*
2nd (7/day)—*arcane lock*, *invisibility*, *shatter* (DC 16)
1st (7/day)—*alarm*, *mage armor*†, *magic missile*, *protection from good*, *shield*
0 (6/day)—*arcane mark*, *daze* (DC 14), *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *ray of frost* (+31 ranged touch), *resistance*
† Already cast
Necromancer Spells Prepared (CL 14th):
7th—*finger of death* (2, DC 21), *greater arcane sight*
6th—*aura of terror*$^{\text{Dr}}$ (DC 23), *circle of death* (DC 20), *globe of invulnerability*, *eyebite* (DC 20)
5th—*feeblemind* (DC 19), *superior magic fang*$^{\text{Dr}}$, *magic jar* (DC 19), *teleport*
4th—*bestow curse* (3, DC 18), *confusion*, *dispelling breath*$^{\text{Dr}}$, *rebuking breath*$^{\text{Dr}}$
3rd—*blinding breath*$^{\text{Dr}}$, *dispel magic* (3), *hold person*, *ray of exhaustion* (+31 ranged touch, DC 17)
2nd—*false life* (2), *blindness/deafness* (2, DC 17), *razorfangs*$^{\text{Dr}}$, touch of idiocy (+41 melee touch)
1st—*chill touch* (2, +41 melee touch, DC 15), *ray of enfeeblement* (2, +31 ranged touch), *true strike* (2)
0—*message* (2), *read magic*, *touch of fatigue* (2, +42 melee touch, DC 14)
Note: If you don't have *Draconomicon*, give Arstyvrax one more *circle of death* at 6th level, another *feeblemind* at 5th, two *enervations* at 4th, another *ray of exhaustion* at 3rd, and another *touch of idiocy* at 2nd.
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th):
3/day—*darkness* (80 ft. radius)
1/day—*plant growth*

Abilities Str 33, Dex 16, Con —, Int 19, Wis 17, Cha 18
SQ create spawn, undead traits, water breathing
Feats Alertness$^{\text{B}}$, Alternate Form*, Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes$^{\text{B}}$, Craft Construct$^{\text{B}}$, Craft Rod$^{\text{B}}$, Dodge$^{\text{B}}$, Flyby Attack, Hidden Strength*, Improved Initiative$^{\text{B}}$, Improved Snatch$^{\text{Dr}}$, Lightning Reflexes$^{\text{B}}$, Multiattack, Power Attack, Quicken Breath$^{\text{Dr}}$, Scribe Scroll$^{\text{B}}$, Shape Breath$^{\text{Dr}}$, Snatch, Tail Constrict$^{\text{Dr}}$, Wingover, Weapon Focus (claw)
Skills Bluff +33, Concentration +30, Disguise +4 (+6 acting), Diplomacy +29, Hide +23, Intimidate +25, Jump +23, Knowledge (arcana) +25, Knowledge (religion) +25, Listen + 33, Move Silently +11, Search +12, Sense Motive +31, Spellcraft +26, Spot +33, Swim +19
Spellbook spells prepared plus 0, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th—all except evocation and illusion; 5th—*blight*, *break enchantment*, *dominate person*, *hold monster*, *major creation*, *passwall*, *permanency*, *symbol of sleep*, *symbol of pain*, *teleport*, *telepathic bond*, *wall of stone*; 6th—*antimagic field*, *create undead*, *greater dispel magic*, *globe of invulnerability*, *symbol of fear*, *symbol of persuasion*; 7th—*greater arcane sight*, *control undead*, *instant summons*, *sequester*, *spell turning*, *symbol of weakness*

Magic Strike (Ex) Arstyvrax's natural attacks are treated as magic weapons for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.
Blood Drain Large or larger living opponents, pin deals 1d4 points of Constitution damage per round.
Breath Weapon (Su) 100-ft. line, once every 1d4 rounds, damage 16d4 acid, Reflex DC 29 half; or 50-ft. cone, once every 1d4+1 rounds, damage 16d4 acid, Reflex DC 29 half.
Charm (Su) As *charm monster*, full-round action, creatures within 240 ft., Will DC 33 negates.

Corrupt Water (Sp) 1/day—spoil up to 10 cubic ft. of water or liquids containing water; range 240 ft.; Will DC 31 negates.

Create Spawn Humanoids or monstrous humanoids slain by Arstyvrax's energy drain rise as vampire spawn (*MM* 253) 1d4 days after death. Dragons slain by Arstyvrax's energy drain, or young adult or younger dragons slain by Arstyvrax's blood drain, rise as zombie dragons (*Dr* 197). Other creatures slain by Arstyvrax's blood drain return as vampire spawn (if they had 4 or fewer HD), or as vampires (if they had 5 or more HD). All vampires or spawn are under Arstyvrax's command until his death.

Dominating Gaze (Su) As *dominate person*, range 110 feet, Will DC 19 negates, caster level 18th. The save DC is Charisma-based. Unlike other supernatural abilities, Arstyvrax's dominating gaze can be dispelled with *dispel magic, break enchantment,* or a similar effect.

Energy Drain A living creature hit by Arstyvrax's claw attack gains one negative level.

Fast Healing In addition to gaining the normal effect of fast healing, Arstyvrax automatically assumes gaseous form if reduced to 0 hit points or lower.

Improved Snatch Against Medium or smaller creatures, bite for 2d8+11 per round or claw for 2d6+5 per round.

Quicken Breath Arstyvrax can use his breath weapon as a free action, but doing so adds 4 to the number of rounds he must wait before using his breath weapon again.

Shape Breath Arstyvrax can shape his breath weapon into a cone, but doing so adds 1 to the number of rounds he must wait before using his breath weapon again.

Tail Constrict (Ex) If Arstyvrax hits with a tail slap attack, he can attempt to grapple a Large or smaller creature as if he had the improved grab special attack. If he succeeds at his grab, he constricts and deals 2d6+16 bludgeoning immediately and each subsequent round that he maintains his hold. Arstyvrax cannot make tail slap attacks while constricting an opponent with his tail.

Vampiric Weaknesses Arstyvrax shares the typical vampire's vulnerability to stakes and sunlight, except that he can survive 8 consecutive rounds in direct sunlight before being destroyed. He cannot enter a home unless invited, but that does not stop him from destroying it. Unlike other vampires, Arstyvrax is not injured by immersion in water or repelled by garlic or mirrors, and can freely cross running water.

ATHIS THE SCORNED (EL 16)

Most of the dragons of the Vast see the lesser races as insects at worst, playthings at best. One silver dragon, however, amused herself by mating with a lost half-elf. For a time, the silver dragon doted on the spawn, a half-dragon she named Athis, but soon she grew bored and tossed the child out.

In his dozen years with his mother (his father was left to die in the Vast), Athis developed a healthy contempt of dragons. He considers them spoiled, arrogant, and cruel. When his mother evicted him, Athis's contempt turned to rage. He swore vengeance and dedicated his skills to becoming a champion dragonstalker (*Dr* 128).

Now, almost a decade later, Athis the Scorned is one of the most fearsome creatures in the Vast. He stalks dragons with cunning and premeditation and has killed more than one. So far his mother still lives; Athis continues to hone his skills so that one day he will be able to bring her down without fear of failure.

Athis is a loner and cares nothing for the company of nondragons. He is just as likely to target dragon allies as he is dragons themselves; anything to weaken their defenses. As bitter as he is, Athis might even target creatures he sees associating with dragons, without establishing their motives first.

A dire bat (*MM* 62) accompanies Athis on his travels, but poses no threat to an actual dragon. Athis uses the bat to draw dragons into an ambush in chase of what seems like easy prey.

ATHIS THE SCORNED CR 16

Male half-silver dragon ranger 10/dragonstalker^{Dr} 4
LE Medium dragon (augmented humanoid [elf])
Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +17, Spot +17
Languages Common, Draconic, Elven

AC 27, touch 17, flat-footed 22
(+5 Dex, +6 armor, +4 natural, +2 deflection)
hp 91 (14 HD)
Immune cold, paralysis, sleep
Resist acid 5 (armor), evasion
Fort +10, **Ref** +16, **Will** +8; +2 against enchantments

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares) in hide; base speed 30 ft.

25 DRAGON NAMES

Dragon names tend to the long and unpronounceable (at least for the lesser races). When interacting with other creatures, dragons either use a diminutive, creates a descriptive nickname, or insist that the creature attempt to use its full name.

1. Zoeyris
2. O'athgha
3. Qualorem
4. Ingos
5. Moonscale
6. Schiroddra
7. Erosh
8. Baoldeneth
9. Kalari
10. Silverclaw
11. Quisulum
12. Grieves-at-Dusk
13. Xoslor
14. Kalkalenth
15. Sin'beldar
16. Aegariss
17. Needletooth
18. Tiachondan
19. Omat
20. Keeper-of-Thought
21. Dragharoth
22. Essirise
23. Zyigetheld
24. Rey'orishi
25. Sliorithal

Melee mwk short sword +22 (1d6+7/19–20) or
Melee 2 claws +21 each (1d4+7) and
bite +16 (1d6+3)
Ranged *+3 dragonbone composite longbow* +25/+20/+15 (1d8+10/×3) or
Ranged *+3 dragonbone composite longbow* +21 (2d8+20/×3) with Manyshot or
Ranged *+3 dragonbone composite longbow* +23/+23/+18/+13 (1d8+10/×3) with Rapid Shot
Base Atk +14; **Grp** +21
Atk Options Blind-Fight, Manyshot, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, favored enemy dragons +6, favored enemy aberrations +2, favored enemy animals +2, ignore natural armor 1/day, sudden strike (dragon) +4d6
Special Actions breath weapon
Ranger Spells Prepared (CL 5th):
2nd—*protection from energy*
1st—*delay poison, pass without trace*

Abilities Str 24, Dex 20, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 10
SQ animal companion, elf blood, swift tracker, wild empathy +10 (+6 magical beast), woodland stride
Feats Blind-Fight, Endurance[B], Improved Initiative, Manyshot[B], Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot[B], Track[B], Weapon Focus (longbow)
Skills Bluff +1*, Diplomacy +2, Gather Information +8, Hide +19, Jump +0, Knowledge (arcana) +7 , Knowledge (nature) +10, Listen +17*, Move Silently +19, Search +17*, Sense Motive +1*, Spot +17*, Survival +13* (+15 following tracks)
**Hunting Bonus (Ex)* Athis gains an additional bonus equal to his dragonstalker level on Bluff, Listen, Search, Sense Motive, and Spot checks when using these skills against dragons.
Possessions masterwork short sword, *+3 dragonbone*[Dr] *composite longbow* (+7 Str bonus, range 130 ft.), *+3 black dragoncraft*[Dr] *hide armor, ring of protection +2*, necklace of dragon teeth

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Breath Weapon (Su) 30-ft. cone, 1/day, damage 6d8 cold, Reflex DC 12 half.
Ignore Natural Armor (Ex) Once per day, Athis can ignore a target's natural armor bonus (including any enhancements to that natural armor) for one attack (melee or ranged).
Sudden Strike (Dragon) Athis deals this sneak attack damage whenever a dragon target is denied its Dexterity bonus to AC. This otherwise functions as the rogue special ability.

COVERT OPERATIVE (EL 20)

Enalde Shatterson (NE male eldritch giant confessor[MM3]) despises dragons with a passion, but studies them intensely. After many years of research, Enalde decided that, since the dragons were responsible for the downfall of giant civilization, they might also hold the key to its renaissance.

Enalde joined forces with a giant faction known as the Dominion of Purity (*SX* 60) whose goal is to reclaim the lost glory of the giant empire. Enalde spent some time studying the Dominion of Purity's records and observations, and came to the conclusion that he needed more information.

Enalde used a permanent *reduce person* and a combination of illusion spells to secure passage to Argonnessen. Once on the dragon continent, he shed his disguise and went into hiding. Through his stash of *nondetection* and *invisibility* scrolls, he has managed to elude the dragons. Enalde investigates rakshasa ruins and tests for draconic magic residue; he watches dragons from afar and steals into their lairs when possible to snoop around. Enalde hasn't entered Io'lokar yet, but soon he'll discover the city and start working to unlock whatever secrets it contains.

Enalde worships the Mockery, and he has access to the Evil and Trickery domains.

DRACONIC UNDEAD (EL VARIES)

The lure of dark knowledge and power, as represented by the Shadow, is anathema to draconic tradition. As a result, necromancy is a forbidden art among the dragons of Argonnessen. Its practice in Aerenal is the foundation of the conflict between those lands.

However, the frequency with which undead creatures appear in Argonnessen hints that not all dragons are as intolerant of the necromantic traditions as the Conclave would have it. A reluctance to practice the dark art on true dragons makes wyvern zombies (*MM* 267) common creations of low-level necromancers. Dragon skeletons (*MM* 227) are sometimes found wandering the Vast and the fringes of the Thousand, but more fearsome by far are the skeletal dragons (*Dr* 192) and zombie dragons (*Dr* 197) that retain some of their draconic might and majesty even after death. Such creatures are commonly created by the powerful necromancers of the secret Shadowcasters cabal as personal bodyguards and the defenders of their secret lairs.

SKELETAL BLACK DRAGON CR 7

Skeletal mature adult black dragon
N Huge undead
Init +4; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft., keen senses; Listen +0, Spot +0
Aura frightful presence (210 ft., DC 23)

AC 12, touch 8, flat-footed 12
(–2 size, +4 natural)
hp 165 (22 HD); **DR** 5/bludgeoning
Immune acid, cold; undead immunities
SR 21
Fort +13, **Ref** +13, **Will** +13

Speed 60 ft. (12 squares)
Melee bite +28 (2d8+8) and
2 claws +23 each (2d6+4) and
2 wings +23 each (1d8+4) and
tail slap +23 (2d6+12)
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (15 ft. with bite)
Base Atk +22; **Grp** +38

Abilities Str 27, Dex 10, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 14
SQ undead traits
Feats Improved Initiative[B]
Skills Hide –8, Jump +20, Listen +0, Spot +0

Dragon Golems (EL Varies)

The dragons' devotion to the arcane arts has seen Argonnessen produce a world's worth of miraculous magic devices. From planar observatories, to lost artifacts of the Age of Demons, to golems and other constructs, dragon magic produces wonders that are far beyond those produced by the humanoid races.

Some sages speculate that dragon golems (*Dr* 163) could have been the first magic creatures of their kind, and that these constructs are the paradigm for every construct created since. The quori that invaded Xen'drik were known to have experimented with a dizzying number of construct designs. Some suspect that their initial knowledge in this field might have amounted to forbidden dragon magic first stolen by the giants.

The example creatures in *Draconomicon*—the dragonbone golem, drakestone golem, and ironwyrm golem—are typical of the golems created by Argonnessen's dragon wizards and sorcerers. However, many forgotten ruins and magical locations in Argonnessen are guarded by ancient constructs of even more advanced power.

Dragonbone Golem CR 15

N Huge construct
Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +0, Spot +0
Aura fear (60 ft., DC 27)

AC 20, touch 8, flat-footed 20
(–2 size, +12 natural)
hp 232 (35 HD); **DR** 5/magic and adamantine
Immune magic; construct immunities
Fort +11, **Ref** +11, **Will** +11

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares)
Melee bite +32 (2d8+8) and
2 claws +27 each (2d6+4) and
2 wings +27 each (1d8+4) and
tail slap +27 (2d6+12)
Atk Options magic strike
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (15 ft. with bite)
Base Atk +26; **Grp** +42

Abilities Str 27, Dex 10, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 10
SQ construct traits
Feats —
Skills Hide –8, Jump +12, Listen +0, Spot +0

Fear Aura (Su) At the end of each of a dragonbone golem's turns, creatures within 60 feet of it must succeed on DC 27 Will saves or be panicked for 10 rounds. The save DC is Charisma-based.

A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by that same dragonbone golem's aura for 24 hours.

Magic Immunity (Ex) A dragonbone golem has immunity to all spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural effects and abilities.

Magic Strike (Ex) A dragonbone golem's natural attacks are treated as magic weapons for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Gnoll Fugitives (EL 13)

Yerod Toothdiver gained his sobriquet when he dove off a ship into Shargon's Teeth to battle sahuagin, buying his crew enough time to sail safely through the strait. His men mourned him as lost, but six days later Yerod washed up on the shore of Stormreach, battered and waterlogged but alive.

From that day forth, Yerod's reputation as a thunder guide was sealed. Over the next few years, he traveled through many continents. Eleven months ago, he declared he would explore Argonnessen.

Despite his preparations, Yerod and his men found the dangers of the dragon continent overwhelming. Only a few weeks after they set foot on Argonnessen, a nasty bronze dragon enslaved the gnolls. For several months, Yerod and his companions played the part of mindless minions, all the while plotting their escape. Finally the day came, and the gnolls fled. Now they race across the Vast, desperate to find the coastline and somehow escape Argonnessen before their former master finds them.

Yerod's band consists of Athbel, a worshiper of the Traveler (female fiendish gnoll cleric 3; *MM4* 67) and four 5th-level gnoll rangers of various alignments and affiliations (*DMG* 121). One of the gnolls possesses a wolf animal companion.

Yerod is not evil at heart, but he is willing to do anything and everything to get his crew out of Argonnessen.

Yerod Toothdiver CR 11

Male flind^{MM3} rogue 4/thunder guide^{EH} 5
CN Medium humanoid (gnoll)
Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +8, Spot +8
Languages Common, Gnoll, Draconic, Drow, Sahuagin

AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 18; uncanny dodge
(+3 Dex, +6 armor, +2 natural)
hp 91 (11 HD)
Resist evasion
Fort +14, **Ref** +9, **Will** +2

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee flindbar +16 (2d4+11/19–20)
Base Atk +7; **Grp** +13
Atk Options pandin temn, sneak attack +2d6

Abilities Str 23, Dex 16, Con 17, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 10
SQ breath of Shargon, lionized in the press, native ties (drow of Xen'drik), trapfinding, trap sense +1
Feats Endurance, Great Fortitude, Toughness, Weapon Focus (flindbar)
Skills Balance +5, Climb +11, Decipher Script +9, Diplomacy +7 (+9 with gnolls), Jump +13, Knowledge (geography) +9, Knowledge (local) +8, Listen +7, Search +9, Speak Language (Drow), Spot +7, Survival +2 (+4 to keep from getting lost, to avoid hazards, and when following tracks), Tumble +12
Possessions *+3 studded leather armor, +2 flindbar, cloak of resistance +1, Heward's handy haversack*

Breath of Shargon (Ex) Yerod can hold his breath for 1 minute per point of Constitution. After this period of time, he must make Constitution checks normally to continue holding his breath.

Flindbar Yerod gains a +2 bonus on opposed attack rolls made to disarm an enemy (including the roll to avoid being disarmed if such an attempt fails). If Yerod threatens a critical hit, he can make a free disarm attempt, without provoking an attack of opportunity, against that opponent before confirming the critical hit.

Lionized in the Press Yerod gains a +2 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy checks when dealing with members of the press, nobility, and dragonmarked houses in Khorvaire (or their agents on Argonnessen, if he ever encounters any).

Native Ties Yerod gains a +2 competence bonus on Diplomacy, Gather Information, and Sense Motive checks made with a family of drow within 50 miles of the Thunder Sea coast of Xen'drik. The family could provide items and spells (*EH* 65).

Pandin Temn (Ex) Yerod gains a +1 dodge bonus to Armor Class and a +1 bonus on attack rolls when fighting any creature that is Large or larger.

GRIFFON PRIDE (EL 12)

Dragons are not the only creatures to inhabit the skies of Argonnessen. On the border of the Thousand, a pride of griffons nests on a high mountain peak. Though the Thousand dragons prefer not to keep minions or allow nondragons to live in their demesnes, the griffons technically live just outside the border. The griffons sometimes hunt in Thousand skies, but they offer a measure of protection from their position on the border; the griffons don't bother the dragons, but attack smaller threats that come too close to the pride. For the time being, the Thousand dragons leave the griffons alone.

The leader of the pride of ten griffons is an exceptionally large and beautiful griffon named Brightfeather. Dragons from the Vast sometimes conspire to capture Brightfeather and release him in their lands, because the griffon would make fine prey for a hunt. So far, none of these plans have come to fruition.

BRIGHTFEATHER CR 9

N Huge magical beast

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Listen +9, Spot +13

Languages understands Common

AC 18, touch 9, flat-footed 17
(–2 size, +1 Dex, +9 natural)

hp 210 (20 HD)

Fort +19, **Ref** +13, **Will** +9

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares), fly 80 ft. (average); Flyby Attack

Melee bite +27 (3d6+8) and
2 claws +25 each (1d6+4)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +20; **Grp** +36

Atk Options Power Attack, pounce, rake

Abilities Str 26, Dex 13, Con 20, Int 5, Wis 13, Cha 8

Feats Flyby Attack, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Multiattack, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bite), Weapon Focus (claw)

Skills Hide –7, Jump +19, Listen +9, Spot +13

Pounce (Ex) If Brightfeather dives or charges a foe, he can make a full attack, including two rake attacks.

Rake (Ex) Attack bonus +24 melee, damage 2d6+4.

HALF-DRAGON RAKSHASA (EL VARIES)

Not all half-dragons are the scions of the illicit pairings between dragons and the lesser races. The outsider minions of the Daughter of Khyber have their debased natures twisted even farther by the collusion of draconic and fiendish blood—a dark legacy of the Dragon Below.

Half-dragon rakshasas such as the one described below are living embodiments of the bond between dragon and fiend. As emissaries and liaisons between the Talons of Tiamat and the Lords of Dust, these fiends are in a unique position of power, and they are not afraid to play both sides. While the rajahs in their chains are eternally patient, the Daughter of Khyber grows ever more desperate to escape her prison in the Pit of Five Sorrows. By speeding up her release, the half-dragons hope to further the plots of the Lords of Dust. Tiamat's eventual freedom will shake the world to its foundations and inspire war among the dragons—weakening that race in advance of the rajahs' eventual return.

HALF-DRAGON RAKSHASA CR 18

Rakshasa half-green dragon rogue 10

LE Medium dragon (augmented outsider, native)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +21, Spot +21

Languages Abyssal, Argon, Draconic, Infernal

AC 37, touch 18, flat-footed 32; Dodge, Mobility, improved uncanny dodge
(+5 Dex, +6 armor, +13 natural, +3 deflection)

hp 141 (17 HD); **DR** 15/good and piercing

Immune acid, paralysis, sleep

Resist improved evasion; **SR** 37

Fort +15, **Ref** +20, **Will** +12

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares); Spring Attack

Melee 2 claws +19 each (1d4+5) and
bite +14 (1d6+2) or

Melee *+1 unholy dagger* +20 (1d4+5/19–20)

Base Atk +14; **Grp** +19

Atk Options Blind-Fight

Special Actions breath weapon, detect thoughts, sneak attack +5d6

Combat Gear *potion of fly*, 2 *potions of cure critical wounds*

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 7th):

3rd (5/day)—*dispel magic, summon monster III*

2nd (7/day)—*cat's grace*†, *darkness, see invisibility*

1st (7/day)—*comprehend languages, expeditious retreat, hypnotism* (DC 15), *Nystul's magic aura, protection from evil*

0 (6/day)—*arcane mark, flare* (DC 14), *message, open/close, prestidigitation, ray of frost* (+19 ranged touch), *touch of fatigue* (+19 melee touch, DC 14)

† Already cast

Abilities Str 20, Dex 20, Con 18, Int 15, Wis 13, Cha 19

SQ change shape, trapfinding, trap sense +3

Feats Blind-Fight, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Maximize Breath^{Dr}, Mobility, Spring Attack

Skills Bluff +26, Concentration +13, Diplomacy +26, Disguise +26 (+28 acting), Escape Artist +11, Intimidate +24, Jump +9, Listen +19, Move Silently +23, Open Lock +9, Sense Motive +19, Spellcraft +11, Spot +19

Possessions combat gear plus *bracers of armor +6, +2 unholy dagger, ring of protection +3, cloak of resistance +3, vest of escape*

Breath Weapon (Su) 30-ft. cone, 1/day, 6d8 acid, Reflex DC 17 half.

Change Shape (Su) A rakshasa can assume any humanoid form, or revert to its own form, as a standard action. In humanoid form, a rakshasa loses its claw and bite attacks but uses its dagger. A rakshasa remains in one form until it chooses to assume a new one. A change in form cannot be dispelled, but the rakshasa reverts to its natural form when killed. A *true seeing* spell reveals its natural form.

Detect Thoughts (Su) As the *detect thoughts* spell; continuous; DC 22; caster level 18th. A rakshasa can suppress or resume this ability as a free action.

Maximize Breath A rakshasa can use its breath weapon as a full-round action to deal maximum damage (48 points), but doing so adds 3 to the number of rounds he must wait before using its breath weapon again.

HALF-FIEND DRAGON

(EL VARIES)

Evil dragons are hardly in short supply in Argonnessen, but the fiendish dragon lords of the Talons of Tiamat exceed their mundane kin in power and their rapacious dedication to evil. Many of these are dragons drawn to Tiamat's call at a young age, then twisted by fiendish power as they grow to maturity. Others are dragons corrupted by the dark energies of artifacts and magical locations hidden from sight since the Age of Demons. All share an undying dedication to the Daughter of Khyber, as well as a ruthless and deadly contempt for those in the Talons whose faith is found wanting.

HALF-FIEND OLD GOLD DRAGON CR 24

NE Gargantuan outsider (augmented dragon, fire, native)

Init +4; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., keen senses; Listen +36, Spot +32

Languages Abyssal, Argon, Draconic, Infernal, Mabran

Aura frightful presence (240 ft., DC 33)

AC 44, touch 14, flat-footed 40; Dodge
(–4 size, +4 Dex, +29 natural, +5 deflection)

hp 420 (29 HD); **DR** 10/magic

Immune fire, paralysis, poison, sleep

Resist acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10; **SR** 35

Fort +24, **Ref** +20, **Will** +23

Weakness vulnerability to cold

Speed 60 ft. (12 squares), fly 250 ft. (average), swim 60 ft.

Melee bite +41 (4d6+16/19–20) and
2 claws +41 each (2d8+8) and
2 wings +41 each (2d6+8) and
tail slap +41 (2d8+24)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft. (20 ft. with bite)

Base Atk +29; **Grp** +57

Attack Options Power Attack, Silent Spell, magic strike, smite good 1/day (+20 damage)

Special Actions breath weapon, crush 4d6+24 (DC 31), *luck bonus*

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 11th):
5th (5/day)—*cone of cold* (DC 23), *true seeing*
4th (8/day)—*break enchantment, ice storm, greater invisibility*
3rd (8/day)—*dispel magic, protection from energy, searing light* (+29 ranged touch), *suggestion* (DC 21)
2nd (8/day)—*augury, cat's grace?, cure moderate wounds, Melf's acid arrow* (+29 ranged touch), *whispering wind*
1st (8/day)—*alarm, charm person* (DC 19), *magic missile, protection from good, true strike*
0 (6/day)—*arcane mark, detect magic, flare* (DC 18), *guidance, light, mage hand, mending, prestidigitation, read magic*
† Already cast

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 29th):
1/day—*blasphemy* (DC 25), *contagion* (DC 21), *desecrate, destruction* (DC 25), *geas/quest* (CL 11th), *horrid wilting* (DC 26), *summon monster IX* (fiends only), *unhallow* (DC 23), *unholy blight* (DC 22)
3/day—*bless* (CL 11th), *darkness, poison* (DC 20), *unholy aura* (DC 26)

Abilities Str 43, Dex 18, Con 27, Int 28, Wis 25, Cha 26

SQ alternate form, *detect gems*, water breathing

Feats Dodge, Heighten Breath$^{\text{Dr}}$, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Multiattack$^{\text{Dr}}$, Improved Maneuverability$^{\text{Dr}}$ (2), Maximize Breath$^{\text{Dr}}$, Multiattack, Power Attack, Silent Spell

Skills Appraise +17, Bluff +13, Concentration +40, Decipher Script +20, Diplomacy +44, Disguise +37 (+39 acting), Gather Information +10, Hide –8, Intimidate +40*, Jump +42, Knowledge (arcana) +29, Knowledge (geography) +29, Knowledge (local) +29, Knowledge (nature) +29, Knowledge (the planes) +29, Knowledge (religion) +29, Listen +39, Search +43, Sense Motive +36, Spellcraft +24, Spot +39, Swim +24

Possessions *ring of protection +5*

Magic Strike (Ex) The dragon's natural attacks are treated as magic weapons for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Breath Weapon (Su) 60-ft. cone, once every 1d4 rounds, 16d10 fire, Reflex DC 31 half; or 60-ft. cone, once every 1d4 rounds, weakening gas, 8 Str, Fortitude DC 31.

Heighten Breath The dragon can increase the save DC of either of its breath weapons by up to +8. For each point by which it increases the save DC, add 1 to the number of rounds the dragon must wait to use its breath weapon again.

Detect Gems (Sp) As the *detect magic* spell; three/day; CL 11th.

By concentrating for 1 round, the dragon notes the presence of gems; 2 rounds of concentration reveal the exact number of gems; and 3 rounds reveal their exact location, type, and value.

Improved Multiattack No penalty is applied to the dragon's secondary attacks. Only half Strength bonus is applied to damage, however.

Improved Maneuverability By taking this feat twice, the dragon improves his flight maneuverability from clumsy to average.

Luck Bonus (Sp) Once per day, a gold dragon can touch a gem (usually one embedded in its hide) and enspell it to bring good luck. As long as the dragon carries the gem, it and every creature in a 80-foot radius receive a +1 luck bonus on all saving throws and similar rolls. If the dragon gives an enspelled gem to another creature, only that bearer gets the bonus. The effect lasts for 1d3+24 hours but ends if the gem is destroyed.

Maximize Breath The dragon can use its cone of fire breath weapon as a full-round action to deal maximum damage (160 points), but doing so adds 3 to the number of rounds the dragon must wait before using its breath weapon again.

HIGH CULTISTS (EL VARIES)

Io'lokar is the City of Knowledge, but knowledge sometimes carries a dark price. Some years ago, at the behest of the diviner Elabenna, a scholarly expedition from that city's College of Arcane Sciences pushed deep into the southern tundra in search of a legendary site known as the Black Well. Great lore from the earliest dragons was said to be preserved there, but only tantalizing fragments of it had been brought back by previous expeditions. Led by three veteran fighter/sorcerer surveyors of the college, the expedition and its wyvern mounts departed the city by *greater teleport*, taking to the air once they reached the hinterland.

They were never seen again.

Years later, the disastrous mission to the never-found Black Well is little more than a memory—even in the minds of the three Io'lokari explorers who survived it. What they found at that site and how it inspired them to savagely slay their retainers remains a secret known only to them. Since then, their names and pasts have been forgotten in the name of their service to the Talons of Tiamat. Drawing on the training and expertise granted them by their lives in the city, these former Io'lokari are among the most powerful humanoids in the cult.

HIGH CULTIST CR 22

Human half-white dragon fighter 10/sorcerer 10
CE Medium dragon (augmented humanoid [human])
Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +4, Spot +5
Languages Argon, Draconic, Abyssal
Aura frightful presence (30 ft., DC 23)

AC 27, touch 16, flat-footed 25
(+2 Dex, +7 armor, +4 natural, +4 deflection)
hp 147 (20 HD); **DR** 5/evil (mantle)
Immune cold, paralysis, sleep
Fort +15, **Ref** +8, **Will** +10; +4 against frightful presence of evil dragons, –2 against enchantment effects cast by dragons

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Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee +5 *longspear* +29/+24/+19 (1d8+17/×3) or
Melee 2 claws +27 each (1d6+12) and
bite +20 (1d6+3)
Base Atk +15; **Grp** +22
Atk Options Blind-Fight, Combat Expertise
Special Actions breath weapon
Combat Gear 4 *potions of greater magic fang +5*†
† 1 potion already taken, 3 remaining
Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 10th):
5th (3/day)—*hold monster* (DC 18)
4th (5/day)—*bestow curse* (DC 17), *greater invisibility*
3rd (7/day)—*arcane sight, fireball* (DC 16), *lightning bolt* (DC 16)
2nd (7/day)—*magic mouth, Melf's acid arrow* (+17 ranged touch), *scorching ray* (+17 ranged touch), *spider climb*
1st (7/day)—*alarm, Nystul's magic aura, ray of enfeeblement* (+17 ranged touch), *reduce person* (DC 14), *ventriloquism* (DC 14)
0 (6/day)—*acid splash* (+17 ranged touch), *detect magic, flare* (DC 13), *light, mage hand, mending, prestidigitation, ray of frost* (+17 ranged touch), *touch of fatigue* (+22 melee touch, DC 13)

Abilities Str 24, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 16
SQ familiar (none)
Feats Blind-Fight^{B}, Clinging Breath^{Dr} (2), Dragonthrall^{Dr}, Combat Expertise^{B}, Frightful Presence^{Dr}, Great Fortitude, Greater Weapon Focus (spear)^{B}, Improved Initiative^{B}, Improved Natural Attack (claw), Multiattack, Toughness^{B}, Weapon Focus (spear)^{B}, Weapon Specialization (spear)^{B}
Skills Concentration +14, Bluff +3 (+7 against dragons), Gather Information +8, Handle Animal +11, Intimidate +15, Jump +22, Knowledge (arcana) +19, Knowledge (local) +4, Listen +2, Ride +16 (+18 on dragons), Search +12, Spot +3
Possessions combat gear plus *bracers of armor +7, ring of protection +4, +5 longspear, cloak of charisma +4, ring of counterspells* (*fireball*), *ring of jumping, mantle of faith*

Breath Weapon (Su) 30-ft. cone, 1/day, 6d8 cold, Reflex DC 13 half.

Clinging Breath At the cultist's option, creatures affected by its breath weapon take half the original damage dealt to them in each of the following 2 rounds. Doing so adds 1 to the number of rounds the cultist must wait before using its breath weapon gain. As a full-round action, affected creatures can make a DC 13 Reflex save to scrape off the clinging breath before taking damage.

HORRID GUARDIANS (EL VARIES)

The Gatekeepers were the first to breed horrid animals, but they used techniques learned from the black dragon Vvaraak. Similar breeding practices allow the dragons of Argonnessen to create horrid guardians for their lairs. A copper dragon was supposedly the first to breed horrid lions; now several packs of these guardians roam free across Argonnessen or stand watch over hoards. Most guardian packs consist of one advanced horrid leader and four ordinary dire lions.

ADVANCED HORRID LION CR 9

NE Huge Animal
Init +5; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Listen +9, Spot +8

AC 21, touch 9, flat-footed 20
(–2 size, +1 Dex, +12 natural)
hp 210 (18 HD)
Immune acid
Fort +18, **Ref** +12, **Will** +12

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares)
Melee 2 claws +23 each (2d6+11 plus 4d6 acid) and
bite +16 (3d6+5)
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +13; **Grp** +32
Atk Options acidic attack, improved grab, pounce, rake

Abilities Str 33, Dex 13, Con 25, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10
SQ ill-tempered, improved natural healing

Feats Alertness, Endurance, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (bite)^{B}, Improved Natural Attack (claw)^{B}, Improved Natural Attack (rake)^{B}, Power Attack, Run, Toughness, Weapon Focus (claw)

Skills Hide +2 (+6 in tall grass or heavy undergrowth), Jump +15, Listen +9, Move Silently +10 (+14 in tall grass or heavy undergrowth), Spot +8

Acidic Attack (Ex) A horrid lion's primary attack deals an additional 4d6 points of acid damage.

Ill-Tempered (Ex) Handle animal checks involving an advanced horrid lion take a –4 penalty.

Improved Natural Healing (Ex) A horrid lion heals naturally at three times the normal rate, recovering 54 hit points with a full night's rest.

Pounce (Ex) If an advanced horrid lion charges, it can make a full attack, including two rake attacks.

Rake (Ex) Attack bonus +22 melee, damage 2d6+5.

INQUISITIVE INVESTIGATOR (EL 12)

Kalryni, a young blue dragon, recently left her family in the Thousand to join the meeting of colors and minds in Vorel'arux. Kalryni's color is fresh and lovely, a pale blue azure like the sky at dawn; her mind is less developed. Innocent almost to the point of naivete, Kalryni annoyed her contemporaries, who soon found her endless drone of questions and tangential remarks grating. Patient Tapestry members are helping Kalryni develop her natural intelligence, but the process is tedious. To expedite her learning (and give the Tapestry a break from her chatter), Kalryni was sent to study an ancient rakshasa ruin. What exactly she is supposed to study, Kalryni's not sure, but she takes great pride in her comprehensive sketches of the ruin and her preservation of several pretty rocks found among the debris.

Kalryni has never seen humanoids before, and she finds any encounters with them fascinating. She asks every question that pops into her head, from dietary requirements to mating rituals, and seems delighted at any response. Her attention is both flattering and dangerous, however; the curious dragon sees nothing wrong with slicing open a nondragon for dissection purposes if his comments intrigue her. At best, she might snatch up one "experimental subject" to bring back to Vorel'arux, certain that such a unique find will garner great respect from the Tapestry.

KALRYNI CR 12

Female juvenile blue dragon bard 8
N Large dragon (earth)
Init +4; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., keen senses; Listen +28, Spot +17
Languages Common, Draconic

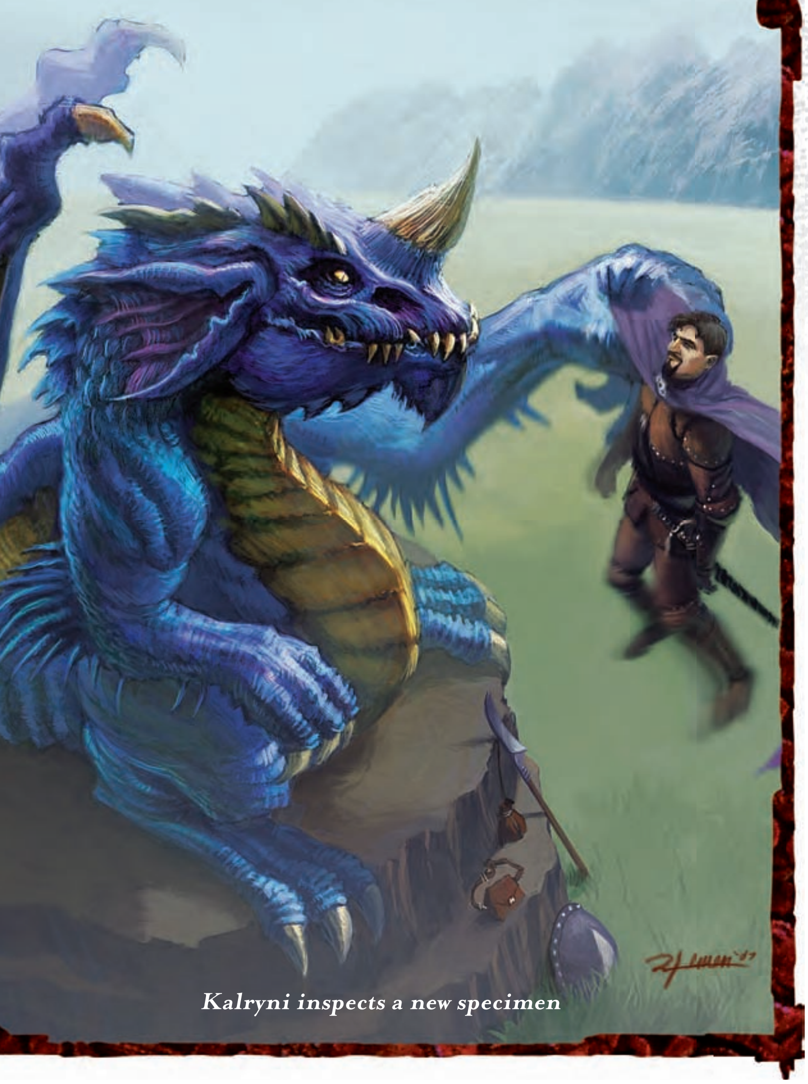
AC 23, touch 9, flat-footed 23
(–1 size, +14 natural)
hp 194 (23 HD)
Immune electricity, paralysis, sleep
Fort +14, **Ref** +17, **Will** +17

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares), burrow 20 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor); Flyby Attack, Wingover
Melee bite +24 (2d6+4) and
2 claws +22 each (1d8+2) and
2 wings +22 each (1d6+2) and
tail slap +22 (1d8+6)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with bite)
Base Atk +21; **Grp** +29

13 ENCOUNTERS IN ARGONNESSEN

Argonnessen is a land of mystery, excitement, and great power. Many secrets hide here, guarded by the ever-vigilant dragons. Characters traveling across the vast continent encounter much more than combat and roleplaying challenges. The setting itself provides insight into the nature of the dragons, the ancient conflicts that abound here, and the wonder of Argonnessen. Use the following events to create atmosphere in your campaign, or to inspire your own events.

1. On the horizon, a pair of dragons fly figure-eights before a rising sun.
2. A trickle of crystal-clear water bubbles up from the center of an enormous draconic footprint.
3. Thick green vines, native to Argonnessen, twine around a dragon's skull. Purple flowers as large as a human's head bloom along the vine and in each eyesocket.
4. A 50-foot-tall marble pillar rises in the center of an otherwise empty plain. Draconic runes on the pillar spell the names of deceased dragons who gave their lives to preserve Eberron and the Prophecy.
5. In a low valley, mushrooms grow to the size of huts, and giant, nonaggressive insects bumble about.
6. On an ancient battlefield, the ghostly roars of dragons rise and fall on the wind.
7. Anyone who falls asleep on a certain plateau has dreams of soaring through the air above Argonnessen.
8. A bubbling brook contains pure, fresh water, but anyone who drinks gets terrible heartburn and belches a gout of fire in the next few minutes.
9. A giant stone claw sits atop a cliff, the only remaining piece of a crumbled statue.
10. A lake in the center of a small crater remains solidly frozen year-round.
11. In a certain area, curative magic heals over open wounds with scales. The scales slough off and reveal ordinary skin after a few days.
12. Three humanoid skulls sit on a ruined stone wall, telling nonsensical stories and singing ancient tunes in off-key voices. The skulls don't recall anything of their mortal lives and possess no useful information.
13. A trickle of magma continually oozes from a volcano; channels funnel the magma into giant molds dug in the ground. Several cooled and hardened magma-statues stand nearby.



Kalryni inspects a new specimen

Atk Options Power Attack
Special Actions bardic music 8/day (countersong, *fascinate* 3 creatures, inspire competence, inspire courage +2, *suggestion* [DC 18])
Bard Spells Known (CL 8th):
3rd (2/day)—*cure serious wounds, good hope, sculpt sound*
2nd (4/day)—*blindness/deafness* (DC 16), *cure moderate wounds, eagle's splendor, glitterdust* (DC 16)
1st (4/day)—*cause fear* (DC 15), *comprehend languages, expeditious retreat, lesser confusion* (DC 15)
0 (3/day)—*dancing lights, ghost sound, lullaby* (DC 14), *message, open/close, prestidigitation*
Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 1st):
1st (4/day)—*magic missile, shocking grasp*
0 (5/day)—*detect magic, mage hand, mending, resistance*
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4th):
3/day—*create/destroy water*

Abilities Str 19, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 9, Wis 15, Cha 18
SQ bardic knowledge +7, sound imitation (DC 26)
Feats Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Magical Aptitude, Multiattack, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Perform), Wingover
Skills Concentration +28, Hide –4, Jump +8, Listen +28, Perform (singing) +18, Speak Language (Common), Spellcraft +27, Spot +17, Use Magic Device +32 (+34 to activate scrolls)
Possessions silver and sapphire armbands (600 gp each), research kit (containing parchments, a dragon-sized quill pen, sketches of ruins, and some pretty rocks in glass jars)

MEMORY OF THE PROPHECY (EL 20)

When the Chamber was still in its infancy almost six hundred years ago, a gifted red dragon proved adept at reading the Prophecy and recommending the best ways to manipulate its strings. Called Iluvira, the red dragon focused all her efforts on comprehending the Prophecy to achieve its purpose. What that purpose was, even Iluvira did not know, but she believed it to be magnificent and desirable.

When a young Chamber agent uncovered four stone tablets etched with cryptic Prophecy fragments, he sent them directly to Iluvira. For almost two years, the mature adult red dragon studied the tablets, each day coming a fraction closer to comprehension. One day she excitedly announced that she was on the verge of a breakthrough; the next day, she was dead, and the tablets missing.

Iluvira's murder was never solved, but the dragon herself is not gone. Her ghostly spirit (*Dr* 161) lingers, distressed over the loss of the tablets and desperately trying to recall what fragmented information she had learned. Iluvira beseeches travelers to seek out the tablets and return them to her; only then can she rest. Living dragons sometimes seek out her spirit to partake of her still-great wisdom. Over the centuries, her name has faded from history, and now the dragons call her Memory of the Prophecy.

MEMORY OF THE PROPHECY CR 20

Ghostly$^{\text{Dr}}$ mature red dragon
LN Huge undead (incorporeal)
Init +0; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., keen senses; Listen +34, Spot +34
Aura frightful presence (210 ft., DC 28)
Languages Common, Draconic, Auran, Elven, Giant, Terran

AC 14, touch 8, flat-footed 14 when manifesting (–2 size, +6 deflection) or
AC 32, touch 8, flat-footed 32 for ethereal encounters (–2 size, +24 natural)
hp 212 (25 HD); **DR** 10/magic for ethereal encounters
Immune fire, paralysis, sleep
SR 23
Fort +14, **Ref** +14, **Will** +18
Weakness vulnerability to cold

Speed fly 150 ft. (perfect); Hover, Wingover
Melee incorporeal touch +23 (withering 1d4 Str + 1d4 Con plus energy drain) when manifesting or
Melee bite +34 (2d8+11) and
2 claws +32 each (2d6+5) and
2 wings +32 each (1d8+5) and
tail slap +32 (2d6+16) for ethereal encounters
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (15 ft. with bite)
Base Atk +25; **Grp** +44
Atk Options Blind-Fight, Cleave, Power Attack, magic strike (for ethereal encounters), manifestation
Special Actions breath weapon, crush 2d8+16 (DC 28) for ethereal encounters
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th):
7/day—*locate object*

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 9th):
4th (5/day)—*dimensional anchor, wall of fire* (DC 20)
3rd (7/day)—*clairaudience/clairvoyance, hold person* (DC 19), *fireball* (DC 19)
2nd (8/day)—*web, scorching ray* (+23 ranged touch), *flaming sphere* (DC 18), *fox's cunning*
1st (8/day)—*alarm, burning hands* (DC 17), *magic missile, shield, true strike*
0 (6/day)—*acid splash* (DC 16), *detect magic, flare* (DC 16), *ghost sound, mage hand, message, prestidigitation, read magic*

Abilities Str 33, Dex 10, Con —, Int 20, Wis 19, Cha 22
SQ rejuvenation, turn resistance +4, undead traits
Feats Alertness, Blind-Fight, Cleave, Hover, Multiattack, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Knowledge [arcana]), Skill Focus (Knowledge [history]), Wingover
Skills Appraise +33, Concentration +28, Diplomacy +36, Intimidate +34, Hide +0, Knowledge (arcana) +36, Knowledge (history) +36, Listen +42, Search +39, Sense Motive +32, Spot +40, Survival +4 (+6 following tracks), Use Magic Device +34

Magic Strike (Ex) Memory of the Prophecy's natural attacks are treated as magic weapons for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Breath Weapon (Su) 50-ft. cone, once every 1d4 rounds, 14d10 fire, Reflex DC 28 half for ethereal encounters; or 50-ft. cone, once every 1d4 rounds (max. 3/day), 7 points of Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution drain, Fortitude DC 28 negates.

Energy Drain (Su) With a successful touch attack, Memory of the Prophecy bestows two negative levels on her target.

Manifestation (Su) As an ethereal creature, Memory of the Prophecy cannot affect or be affected by anything in the material world. When Memory of the Prophecy manifests, she partially enters the Material Plane and becomes incorporeal. At all times, she can use her physical attacks, spells, and special abilities against ethereal opponents and be affected by them.

Rejuvenation (Su) Memory of the Prophecy restores in 2d4 days if destroyed. She can find permanent rest only if the four tablets of the Prophecy are returned to her, and she successfully deciphers them and passes on their contents to another dragon.

Withering (Su) Memory of the Prophecy deals 1d4 points of Strength damage and 1d4 points of Constitution damage with a successful touch attack (Fort DC 28 negates). If she scores a critical hit, the damage is ability drain instead.

OMNIMENTAL (EL 15)

One might suspect a creature as wanton and destructive as this to have spawned in the Vast. However, its inception actually began in Vorel'arux, the center hold of the Tapestry. A group of four dragons—gold, white, blue, and green—performed an unorthodox experiment to try to combine their breath weapons into an animated servant. The experiment went awry and created the omnimental (*MM3* 118).

Possessed of intelligence but no experience or self-control, the omnimental burst forth from Vorel'arux and cut a wide swath of destruction across Argonnessen. It hasn't returned to Vorel'arux thus far, and the Tapestry members hope it never does.

OVERLAND CARAVAN (EL 9)

Members of the Tinkers Guild of House Cannith travel far and wide to peddle their goods and offer repairs. Some travel more widely than others.

Morspeth d'Cannith is both a master artisan and a crafty salesman. Two years ago, Morspeth came across mention of a "bastion of civilization in the midst of the harsh dragon continent." Intrigued, Morspeth conducted further research. Though he found little information beyond vague descriptions, he did eventually glean a name: Io'lokar.

The desire to visit Io'lokar flared up inside Morspeth. He envisions the city as an oasis of humanoid culture, sheltered from the outside world, and potentially full of riches unlike any on Khorvaire. Secretly he also hopes the citizens of Io'lokar might not recognize the worth of their riches, allowing Morspeth to secure a fortune in trade.

After hiring the best guards he could find, Morspeth packed his finest wares in a *portable hole* and set out for Argonnessen. He lost half his expedition to Seren barbarian attacks, and now travels across the continent proper. The rest of his team, terrified and homesick, simply wants to return to Khorvaire, but Morspeth eggs them on with tales of the unimaginable riches waiting in Io'lokar.

Morspeth and his team, two magewrights of House Cannith (*ECS* 232) and two hired House Tharashk bounty hunters (*ECS* 238), have survived mostly by luck so far. Should they encounter a team of competent adventurers, Morspeth offers a share of the trade for an escort to Io'lokar—though when he arrives, Morspeth finds the city completely unlike the one in his imagination.

If Morspeth doesn't encounter aid, he and his team meet a grisly death long before reaching Io'lokar.

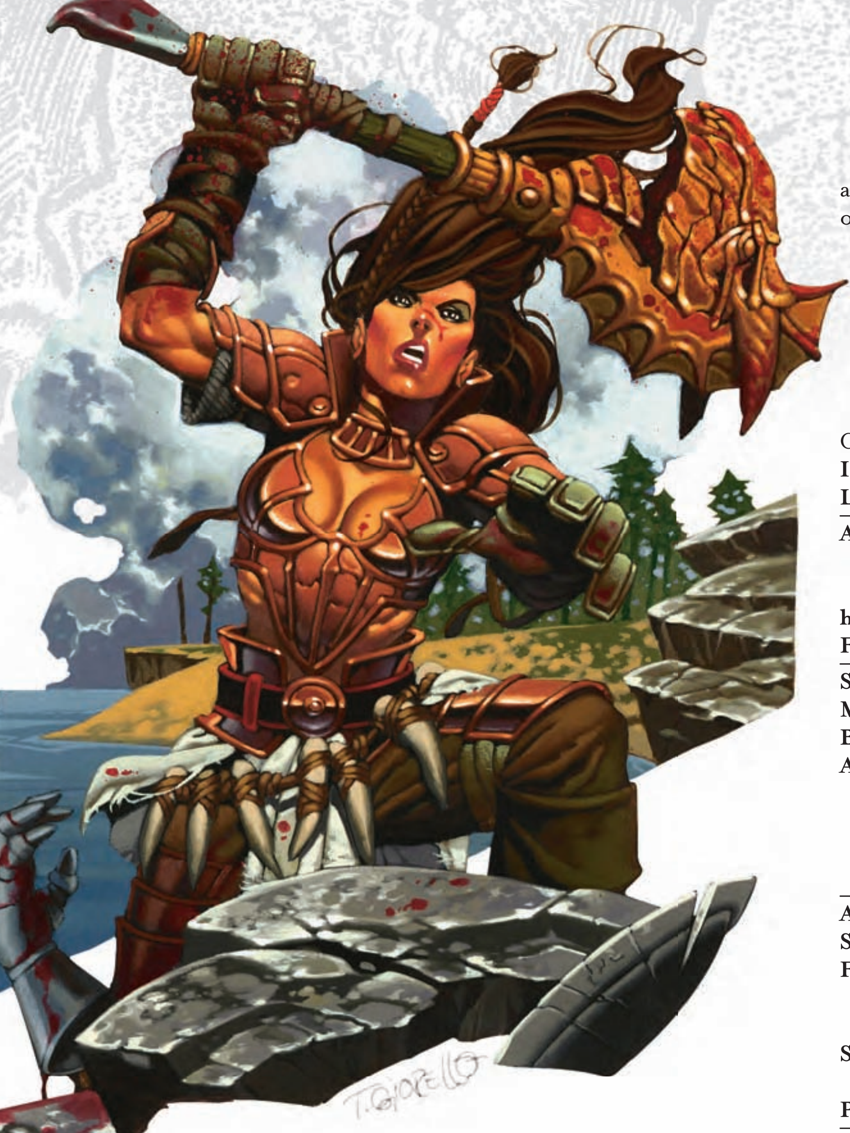
MORSPETH D'CANNITH CR 7

Male human expert 4/artificer 4
N Medium humanoid
Init +0; **Senses** Listen +2, Spot +2
Languages Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Gnome

AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 16
(+6 armor, +1 deflection)
hp 38 (8 HD)
Fort +3, **Ref** +2, **Will** +10

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee mwk alchemical silvered dagger +6 (1d4–2/19–20)
Ranged mwk alchemical silvered dagger +7 (1d4–2/19–20)
Base Atk +6; **Grp** +5
Artificer Infusions Available (CL 4th):
2nd (3/day)
1st (4/day)

Abilities Str 9, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 11
SQ artificer knowledge +7, artisan bonus, craft homunculus, craft reserve 80, disable trap, item creation
Feats Brew Potion^B, Combat Expertise, Craft Wondrous Item^B, Extraordinary Artisan^B, Legendary Artisan, Research, Scribe Scroll^B, Skill Focus (Craft [metalworking])
Skills Appraise +14 (+16 metalworked items), Concentration +12, Craft (metalworking) +17, Disable Device +9, Knowledge (arcana) +14, Knowledge (architecture and engineering) +14, Listen +2, Profession (trader) +13,



Una Wyrmguard defends Totem Beach

Search +14 (+16 secret doors or similar compartments), Spellcraft +16 (+18 to decipher spells on scrolls), Spot +2, Survival +2 (+4 following tracks), Use Magic Device +8 (+12 to activate scrolls and wondrous items)

Possessions *+2 mithral chain shirt,* masterwork alchemical silvered dagger, *ring of protection +1,* masterwork artisan's tools, identification papers with portrait, magnifying glass, merchant's scale, *portable hole* filled with trade goods

SEREN DRAGON-WORSHIPERS (EL 18)

Una Wyrmguard, a barbarian queen, is one of the toughest and most dedicated Totem Guardians of the Dragonsreach. When Una was a child, a dragon visited her in her dreams. "You have a great destiny," the dragon proclaimed. "On this beach you shall defend us Dragon Gods from interlopers; we rely on you and place our lives in your hands." Overwhelmed by the experience, Una swore she would defend the dragons forever.

The great beast who infiltrated her dreams didn't spare another thought for the child. The seed had been placed, and another group of barbarians would now take up the cause of defense, acting as a living shield between Argonnessen and the rest of the world.

Over the years, Una rose in stature among the Seren barbarians. She leads an elite team of warriors (four male and female human 10th-level barbarians; see *DMG* 112) on patrols along various sections of the beach, watching for any potential threats. If Una spies a trespasser from shore, she warns them off with shouts and threats. If the trespasser sets foot on the beach, his life is forfeit.

UNA WYRMGUARD CR 14

Female human barbarian 8/frenzied berserker^{CW} 6
CE Medium humanoid
Init +1; **Senses** Listen +1, Spot +1
Languages Common

AC 13, touch 5, flat-footed 12; improved uncanny dodge, uncanny dodge
(+1 Dex, +8 armor, –4 frenzy, –2 rage)
hp 166 (14 HD); **DR** 1/—
Fort +16, **Ref** +5, **Will** +7

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares)
Melee *+2 greatclub* +28/+28/+23/+18 (1d10+18)
Base Atk +14; **Grp** +25
Atk Options Cleave, Destructive Rage, Intimidating Rage, Power Attack (improved, each –1 attack grants +3 damage up to maximum –14 attack/+42 damage), frenzy 3/day, inspire frenzy 1/day, rage 3/day (8 rounds), supreme cleave

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Abilities Str 33, Dex 13, Con 21, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 10
SQ deathless frenzy, fast movement, illiteracy, trap sense +2
Feats Cleave, Destructive Rage^{CW}, Diehard^{B}, Intimidating Rage^{CW}, Great Cleave, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatclub)
Skills Climb +25, Intimidate +11, Jump +29, Knowledge (nature) +2, Listen +1, Swim +22, Spot +1, Survival +12
Possessions *+3 mithral breastplate, +2 greatclub, belt of giant strength +2*

Deathless Frenzy (Ex) When frenzied, Una isn't considered disabled if she has 0 hit points or is incapacitated below –1 hit point. Even if she's below –9 hit points, she doesn't die until the frenzy is over, if she receives no healing.

Destructive Rage When in a rage or frenzy, Una gains a +8 bonus on any Strength checks she makes to break down doors or break inanimate, immobile objects.

Frenzy (Ex) As a free action during her turn, Una can frenzy. She also frenzies at the start of her next action if she takes damage from any source (assuming she has frenzy usages left that day) and does not succeed on a Will save (DC equal to 10 + the points of damage she has taken since her last action).

When frenzied, Una gains a +6 bonus to Strength, and she gains a single extra attack at her highest attack bonus if she makes a full attack action. She takes a –4 penalty to Armor Class and takes 2 points of nonlethal damage every round. The frenzy lasts for 6 rounds (8 rounds if she is also raging). Una can voluntarily end her frenzy with a DC 20 Will save 1/round as a free action. When a frenzy ends, she is fatigued for the duration of the encounter. If she is still under the effect of rage, the fatigue does not apply but she is exhausted when the rage ends.

When in a frenzy, Una cannot use any Charisma-, Dexterity-, or Intelligence-based skills (except Intimidate), or any abilities that require concentration. She cannot cast spells, drink potions, activate magic items, or read scrolls. Una must attack foes, or a random creature if no foes remain.

Improved Power Attack Una gains a +3 bonus on her greatclub melee damage rolls for every –1 penalty she takes on the attack roll when using the Power Attack feat.

Inspire Frenzy (Su) When Una uses this ability, all willing allies within 10 feet of her gain the benefit and the disadvantage of frenzy as if they had that ability themselves. The frenzy of affected allies lasts for 6 rounds (8 rounds if she is also raging), regardless of whether they remain within 10 feet of her.

Intimidating Rage When in a rage or frenzy, Una designates a single foe within 30 feet of her that she can attempt to demoralize as a free action (*PH* 76). A foe she successfully demoralizes remains shaken for as long as she continues to rage or frenzy. She can use this feat against only a single foe per encounter.

Supreme Cleave Una can take a 5-foot step between attacks when using the Cleave or Great Cleave feats. She is still limited to one such adjustment per round, so she cannot use this ability during a round in which she has already taken a 5-foot step.

When not raging or frenzied, Una has the following changed statistics:

AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed 18
hp 138 (14 HD)
Fort +14, **Will** +5
Melee *+2 greatclub* +23/+18/+13 (1d10+9)
Grp +20
Abilities Str 23, Con 17
Skills Climb +20, Jump +24, Swim +17

SPELLWARPED ROC (CR 13)

Even some evil dragons shudder at the experiments their more twisted kinfolk perform on lesser creatures. Still the experiments continue—infrequently, always in secret, but they do continue. A handful of evil dragon sorcerers enjoy manipulating lesser life forms into abominations of depraved strength; other dragons secretly encourage these experiments, and their results roam wild on the Vast, providing challenging hunts.

One such worthy opponent is an enormous roc, fed with arcane power until it swelled to distended proportions and gained a number of special abilities. The spellwarped (*MM3* 162) experiment also awakened a dull intelligence in the roc's mind. As evil now as the beings who created it, the roc soars through the skies of the Vast in search of prey.

In combat, the roc's cruel nature drives it to play with its food, often snapping up a small creature and then dropping it from a hundred feet up. The roc has survived this long through cunning and an instinct for self-preservation; on occasion a dragon tracks it down, then releases the roc so that the hunt can continue.

SPELLWARPED^{MM3} ROC CR 15

NE Gargantuan aberration (augmented animal)
Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +20, Spot +25

AC 21, touch 9, flat-footed 18
(–4 size, +3 Dex, +12 natural)
hp 432 (32 HD)
SR 43
Fort +27, **Ref** +21, **Will** +11

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares), fly 80 ft. (average); Flyby Attack, Hover, Wingover
Melee 2 talons +35 each (2d6+14) and bite +30 (3d8+7)
Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.
Base Atk +24; **Grp** +50
Atk Options Flyby Attack, Power Attack, Snatch

Abilities Str 38, Dex 17, Con 28, Int 6, Wis 13, Cha 11
SQ spell absorption
Feats Alertness, Flyby Attack, Hover, Improved Natural Armor, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Iron Will, Power Attack, Snatch, Weapon Focus (bite), Weapon Focus (talon), Wingover
Skills Hide –9, Jump +8, Listen +18, Spot +23

Spell Absorption (Su) Whenever a spell fails to penetrate a spellwarped roc's spell resistance, it gains one of the following benefits, chosen at the time the spell resolves.

Might: The spellwarped roc gains a +4 enhancement bonus to Strength for 1 minute.

Agility: The spellwarped roc gains a +4 enhancement bonus to Dexterity for 1 minute.

Endurance: The spellwarped roc gains a +4 enhancement bonus to Constitution for 1 minute.

Life: The spellwarped roc gains temporary hit points equal to 5 × the level of the failed spell.

Speed: The spellwarped roc's base speed increases by a number of feet equal to 5 × the level of the failed spell.

Resistance: The spellwarped roc gains resistance 10 to one energy type (acid, cold, electricity, fire, or sonic).

DETAILED ENCOUNTERS

DAWNWING

"Grant me your obedience, and I shall reward you with protection. Grant me your devotion, and I shall bathe you in the magnificence of my presence. Turn away from my benevolent guidance, and I shall pick my teeth with your bones."

—Dawnwing of the Vast

Dawnwing prefers using the name his goblin servitors invented; to the great gold dragon, the name reflects his beauty and magnificence. In his lair on the Vast, Dawnwing rarely comes into contact with the elder dragons of Argonnessen, the only ones who might care about family names and official titles. So Dawnwing he remains.

Centuries ago, Dawnwing hatched amid fanfare and high hopes. His parents, both young gold dragons, served the Chamber and hoped their child would outdo them in devotion and accomplishment. Sadly, their hopes died only a few decades after Dawnwing's hatching. The young dragon displayed arrogance, selfishness, and a desire for power incompatible with the Chamber's goals. When Dawnwing left for the Vast, his parents made one last effort to convince their errant child to rethink his priorities. Dawnwing turned a deaf ear and has not returned to the Tapestry since.

For several years, Dawnwing fought to establish his place in the Vast. During construction of his lair, the dragon unearthed a tribe of goblins hiding underground. He pressed the goblins into his service, and now the tribe serves him with fear-filled devotion.

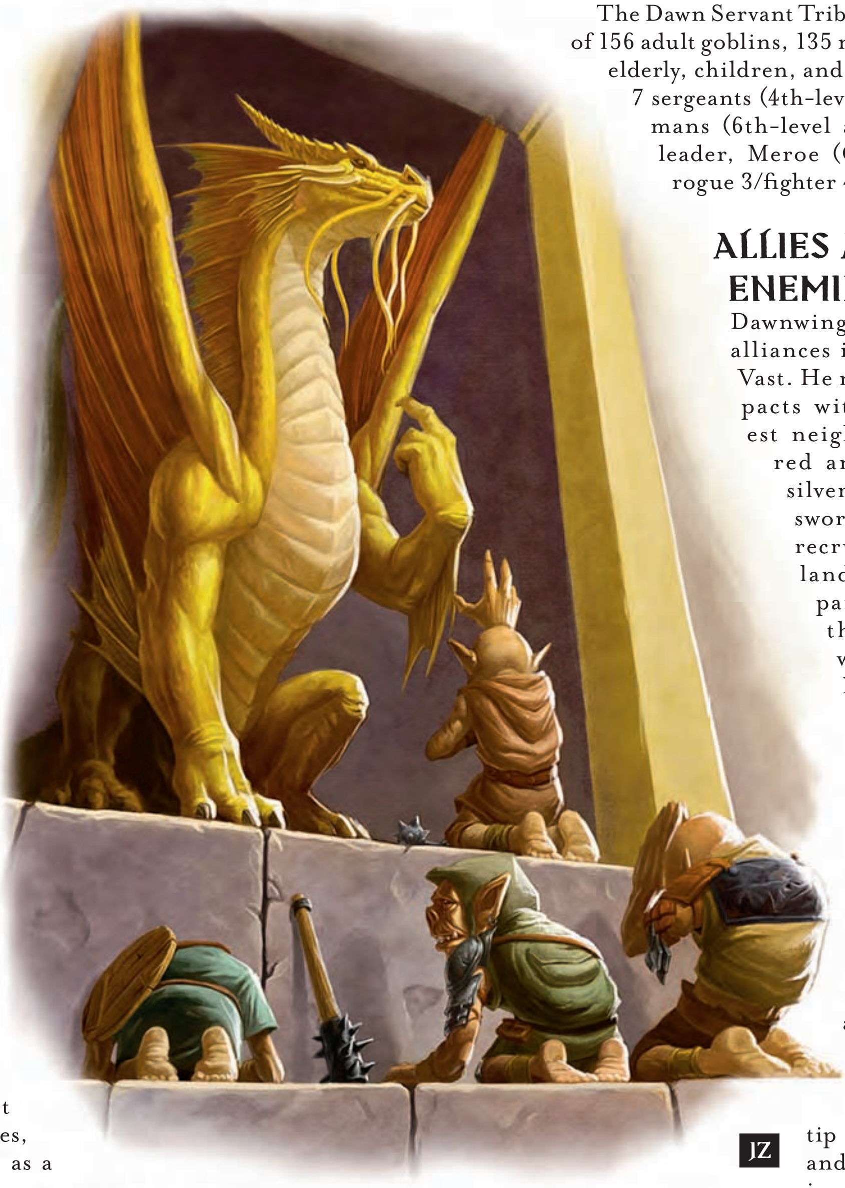
Dawnwing is by no means the strongest dragon on the Vast, but his great arrogance and unconquerable spirit makes him a dangerous up-and-comer. Dawnwing sees a great destiny in his future, and shows no compunctions about killing anyone who threatens that vision.

DESCRIPTION

Dawnwing takes his name from his magnificent coloring. The bulk of his scales shine a bright, buttery gold. His underbelly and the tips of his wings are a creamy ivory. The span of his wings and his whiskers hold the pale yellow tint of the sky just before the sun rises. Dawnwing's orange irises glow in the molten gold of his eyes.

Larger than his peers, Dawnwing measures 62 feet from snout to tail. His outstretched wings measure 70 feet from tip to tip, and his curving tail is almost 30 feet long.

Dawnwing prefers to keep his hoard hidden and safe, but he does wear one item regularly: a white-gold torc set with a dozen topazes, each gem as large as a human male's fist.



Dawnwing rules the Dawn Servant goblin tribe

MINIONS

When Dawnwing unearthed the hidden tribe of goblins, he instantly discerned how useful the tiny creatures could be. Dawnwing considers his status greater when he has minions, and his prideful nature demands lesser creatures to rule over. His frightful presence set the goblins running and screaming in fear of their lives, but Dawnwing rounded them up and bullied them into submission. At first the goblins resisted, but after years in the presence of Dawnwing's awesome Charisma and obvious might, they now serve him with utter devotion.

In tribute to their master, the goblins, self-titled the Dawn Servant Tribe, shave their body hair and paint their skin yellow. Over the years the goblins perfected an alchemical process to make the paint shine like gold, and Dawnwing grudgingly allowed them a few of his shed scales with which to make shields. When fully arrayed, the goblins shine almost as brightly as their master.

The Dawn Servant Tribe currently consists of 156 adult goblins, 135 noncombatants (the elderly, children, and pregnant females), 7 sergeants (4th-level warriors), 2 shamans (6th-level adepts), and their leader, Meroe (CN female goblin rogue 3/fighter 4).

ALLIES AND ENEMIES

Dawnwing has forged several alliances in his time on the Vast. He maintains hunting pacts with his two nearest neighbors, a juvenile red and a young adult silver. Each dragon has sworn not to hunt or recruit on the others' lands, and so far all parties have upheld the truce. Dawnwing smarts at the lack of expansion possibilities, however, and has been plotting for several years how best to conquer the red's territory. He occasionally sends one of his goblins next door to scout the land and report on the red's activities. Still, Dawnwing doesn't want to tip his claw too early, and hasn't sent a scout in several months.

Within the Dawn Servant Tribe, one of Dawnwing's minions plots his own coup. Smok (NG male goblin adept 6) is a tribal spiritual advisor. Smok possesses great intelligence and wisdom, and he believes that Dawnwing's patronage could prove disastrous for the tribe. In time, the adept believes that Dawnwing will move on to bigger and more important conquests and either leave the tribe behind to be claimed by another dragon or, more likely, kill them and replace them with more prestigious minions. Smok wants the goblins to revolt and break free from Dawnwing one way or another.

Smok's greatest challenge, however, is not the great gold dragon. Meroe, the current leader of the Dawn Servant Tribe, is also intelligent and charismatic. She believes that Dawnwing will protect the tribe as long as it serves him faithfully, and she has many supporters. Smok's primary goal is to overthrow Meroe's leadership and then focus his efforts on finding a way out of Dawnwing's grasp.

HOOKS

Entering the Vast could put the characters in direct conflict with Dawnwing. Other possible hooks include:

Expanding Territories: Dawnwing desires more territory. To ensure that the expansion effort goes smoothly, the dragon recruits nearby characters to assist in the assault. After a successful expansion, however, Dawnwing is reluctant to set his new minions free.

Revolt from Within: After a successful coup, Smok becomes leader of the Dawn Servant Tribe. He encounters the PCs on their travels and convinces them to help free the goblins by slaying Dawnwing.

DAWNWING CR 19

Male young adult gold dragon sorcerer 10
CN Huge dragon

Init +4; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., keen senses; Listen +27, Spot +27
Aura frightful presence (150 ft., DC 31)
Languages Common, Draconic, Auran, Elven, Goblin

AC 27, touch 8, flat-footed 27
(–2 size, +19 natural)
hp 305 (30 HD); **DR** 5/magic
Immune fire, paralysis, sleep
SR 21
Fort +22, **Ref** +17, **Will** +21
Weakness vulnerability to cold

Speed 60 ft. (12 squares), fly 200 ft. (poor), swim 60 ft.
Melee bite +33 (2d8+10) and
2 claws +28 each (2d6+5) and
2 wings +30 each (1d8+5) and
tail slap +30 (2d6+15)
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (15 ft. with bite)
Base Atk +25; **Grp** +43
Atk Options Extend Spell, Maximize Spell, Power Attack, Widen Spell, magic strike
Special Actions breath weapon
Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 15th; 1d20+17 to overcome SR):
7th (4/day)—*hiss of sleep*[Dr] (DC 25), *mass hold person* (DC 25)
6th (6/day)—*imperious glare*[Dr] (DC 22), *mass suggestion* (DC 24), *permanent image* (DC 23)
5th (6/day)—*hold monster* (DC 23), *mirage arcana* (DC 22), *prying eyes, greater wings of air*[Dr]
4th (7/day)—*charm monster* (DC 22), *confusion* (DC 22), *greater invisibility, rainbow pattern* (DC 21)
3rd (7/day)—*deep slumber* (DC 21), *dispel magic, displacement, fireball* (DC 19)
2nd (7/day)—*daze monster* (DC 20), *eagle's splendor, locate object, Tasha's hideous laughter* (DC 20), *wings of air*[Dr]
1st (7/day)—*charm person* (DC 19), *color spray* (DC 18), *expeditious retreat, hypnotism* (DC 19), *shield*
0 (6/day)—*daze* (DC 18), *detect magic, disrupt undead, flare* (DC 16), *ghost sound* (DC 17), *mage hand, open/close, ray of frost* (DC 16), *touch of fatigue* (+33 melee touch, DC 16)
Note: If you don't have *Draconomicon*, then give Dawnwing *insanity* at 7th level, *eyebite* at 6th, *teleport* at 5th, and *whispering wind* at 2nd.
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th):
3/day—*bless*

Abilities Str 31, Dex 10, Con 21, Int 18, Wis 19, Cha 22
SQ alternate form, summon familiar (none), water breathing
Feats Combat Casting, Eschew Materials, Extend Spell, Greater Spell Focus (enchantment), Improved Initiative, Maximize Spell, Power Attack, Spell Focus (enchantment), Spell Focus (illusion), Spell Penetration, Widen Spell
Skills Appraise +4 (+6 gems and jewelry), Bluff +21, Concentration +38 (+42 casting defensively), Craft (gemcutting) +14, Craft (jewelrymaking) +14 , Diplomacy +33, Disguise +6 (+8 acting), Hide –8, Intimidate +31, Jump +22, Knowledge (arcana) +37, Listen +27, Search +27, Sense Motive +27, Spellcraft +39 (+41 to decipher scrolls), Spot +27, Use Magic Device +29 (+31 to activate scrolls), Survival +4 (+6 following tracks)
Possessions *torc of persuasion* (functions as *circlet of persuasion*)

Magic Strike (Ex) Dawnwing's natural attacks are treated as magic weapons for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Breath Weapon (Su) 50-ft. cone, once every 1d4 rounds, damage 10d4 fire, Reflex DC 30 half; or 50-ft. cone, once every 1d4 rounds, weakening gas, 5 Str, Fortitude DC 30.

PALACE OF THE SUN

Dawnwing believes a dragon of his stature deserves a palatial lair to reflect his magnificence. Such a lair takes much time and expense to create, however, not to mention valuable building materials that could better reside in his hoard. Dawnwing thus compromises with an ordinary lair that seems extraordinary.

Keyed Locations

The following features correspond to numbered areas on the map.

1. Pillars of Gold: A wide cavern mouth opens into a craggy mountainside and reveals the way to Dawnwing's lair. Through gratuitous use of illusion spells, Dawnwing creates the appearance of a yawning archway flanked with two pillars of gold. The pillars gleam as if continually reflecting the rising sun; each stands 50 feet tall and is farther around than an ogre can reach. Anyone touching the pillars or otherwise interacting with them receives a Will save, because the wondrous displays of wealth are actually *permanent images*.

A genuine flight of overlarge carved steps leads up to the cavern entrance. Dawnwing never uses the stairs himself, but he enjoys watching his goblin servitors struggle their way up.

Each morning and dusk, Dawnwing casts *mirage arcana* to alter the terrain around his lair in a pleasing fashion.

He fashions the terrain according to his whim—one day might see a crystal-clear waterfall tumbling down on either side of the golden pillars, and on the next, lush forest growth covers the mountainside.

2. Zenith Lounge: Dawnwing terms this room the zenith lounge, and it is one of the few rooms in which he invested actual time and money. The conical chamber rises to a narrow, peaked ceiling. At the ceiling's apex, Dawnwing installed an oval crystal 10 feet across. From mid-morning to mid-afternoon, the sun streams down through the crystal and fills the cavern with dancing rainbows. When Dawnwing reclines here, the multitude of colors shimmering over his scaled hide truly makes him a sight to behold.

Dawnwing also installed a safety mechanism in this room. A lever on the wall, camouflaged but not concealed, can adjust the crystal's angle. As a standard action, Dawnwing can focus a beam of sunlight on anyone in the room, causing 15d6 points of fire damage (Reflex DC 22 half).

3. Parlor: Dawnwing keeps a few attractive items here to entertain guests, such as his allied dragon neighbors. Two or three goblins possess a knack for drawing, and they have covered the walls with illustrations of Dawnwing's arrival among them. Numerous images of goblins prostrating themselves before a reclining dragon mingle with smaller images of Dawnwing hunting, Dawnwing casting spells, Dawnwing eating, and Dawnwing sleeping—all liberally embellished with gold paint.

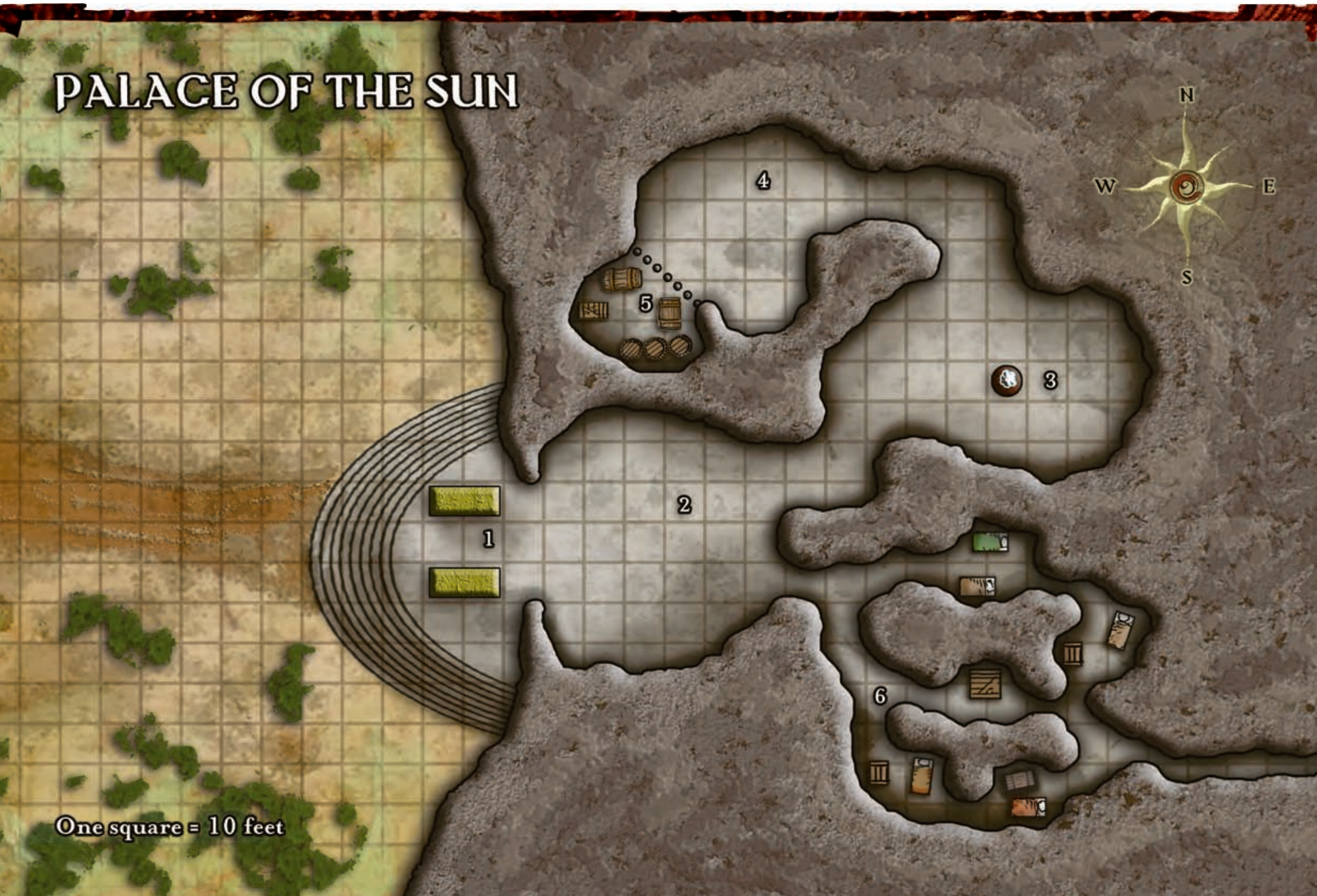
The piece de resistance of the parlor is an enormous chunk of pure mithral, almost as large as a human man. Its rough edges give it an earthy, edgy appeal, and it sits mounted on a block of red marble. Dawnwing makes light of his "paperweight" in the company of others, but greatly values the mithral showpiece. A *mass hold person* trap wards the item.

Mass Hold Person Trap: CR 8; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (*mass hold person*, 15th-level sorcerer, Will DC 25 negates); multiple targets (one or more humanoid creatures, no two of which can be more than 30 ft. apart); Search DC 32; Disable Device DC 32. Cost: 52,500 gp, 4,200 XP.

4. Dawnwing's Hold: This is Dawnwing's private sanctum, his home, and few aside from the gold dragon ever see this room. From time to time, he grants the current goblin leader an audience here, but he generally conducts all business in the parlor.

Bolts of silk cloth intercepted crossing his land (and confiscated as a tariff) line the floor. Atop the reams of red and purple silk, Dawnwing layers his coins. Copper goes on the bottom, of course, followed by silver, platinum, and gold. Though platinum is more valuable than gold, Dawnwing likes the color of gold and finds it more comfortable. This layering requires Dawnwing to rearrange his hoard each time he acquires new coins, a task the dragon relishes.

Larger items such as objets d'art, paintings, and tapestries that strike Dawnwing's fancy ring the chamber. At the rear of the room stands a large steel



portcullis, the first safeguard for the bulk of the hoard beyond.

5. Glorious Hoard: Before moving into his hold, Dawnwing allowed the goblins into this room to decorate the walls. The numerous displays of goblin devotion blend together in a mishmash of shining dragon images, which is just how Dawnwing likes it.

The bulk of the dragon's treasure rests safely here, guarded by the steel portcullis (Open Lock DC 30 to open, plus Strength DC 20 to lift) and by a *pitch black luminary* ward (*Dr* 84). The steel half-orb mounted in the ceiling sheds *deeper darkness* that fills the cavern. Not even creatures that can normally see in the dark can see in this darkness, and it cancels out any normal light as well as any magical light of 2nd level or lower. If a *daylight* spell is brought into or cast in the area, it and the *pitch black luminary* cancel each other out until the *daylight* spell expires or is removed from the area. Finding and disabling the *pitch black luminary's* magical effect requires DC 28 Search and Disable Device checks (suppresses ward for 1d4 rounds, unless the DC is beaten by 10 or more, then 1d4 minutes).

A shutter controls the *pitch black luminary*. Though Dawnwing can use his blindsense to move about this room unimpeded, he sometimes turns the darkness off so that he can better admire his treasures (and the paintings).

6. Goblin Warrens: These winding tunnels contain frightened or awestruck goblins and their families. Crude fire pits, intriguing cave drawings, preserved foodstuffs, and rough bedrolls fill the area. The goblins obey Dawnwing with slavish devotion; only Smok, an adept, believes differently. A narrow passage opens out in a back door almost a mile away.

SMOK CR 5

Male goblin adept 6
NG Small humanoid (goblinoid)
Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., Listen +9, Spot +9
Languages Common, Goblin, Draconic, Argon, Auran

AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 13
(+1 size, +1 Dex, +2 armor)
hp 23 (6 HD)
Fort +2, **Ref** +3, **Will** +8

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee masterwork club +4 (1d4–1)
Base Atk +3; **Grp** –2
Adept Spells Prepared (CL 6th):
2nd—*aid, cure moderate wounds*
1st—*bless, command, cure light wounds*
0—*create water, cure minor wounds, purify food and drink*

Abilities Str 9, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 10
SQ summon familiar (none)
Feats Alertness, Empower Spell, Improved Initiative
Skills Heal +12, Hide +6, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Listen +9, Move Silently +5, Ride +5, Spellcraft +14 , Spot +9
Possessions masterwork leather armor, masterwork club, face and body paint, carved wooden dragon holy symbol

ZENOBAAL

> *"I was like you once—craving understanding, fruitlessly chasing every clue to the Prophecy in hopes of mastering it. I too wanted to avert disaster, bring enlightenment to the world. The Prophecy is a cruel mistress, young one. I have seen all there is to see. I know the stars. The future thunders in my heart. You should thank me for destroying you now, before it comes to pass."*
>
> —Zenobaal, Prophecy Incarnate

Few dragons alive today comprehend the Prophecy as well as Zenobaal. Devoted to study as a youth, Zenobaal mastered potent magic to create a wondrous planar orrery among the clouds, so close to the sky he could almost reach out and touch those burning spheres of Prophecy above. As an adult, Zenobaal did great works. He shared his awe-inspiring insights into the Prophecy with other dragons, and he sought to use his understanding to better the world for all the races that shared it.

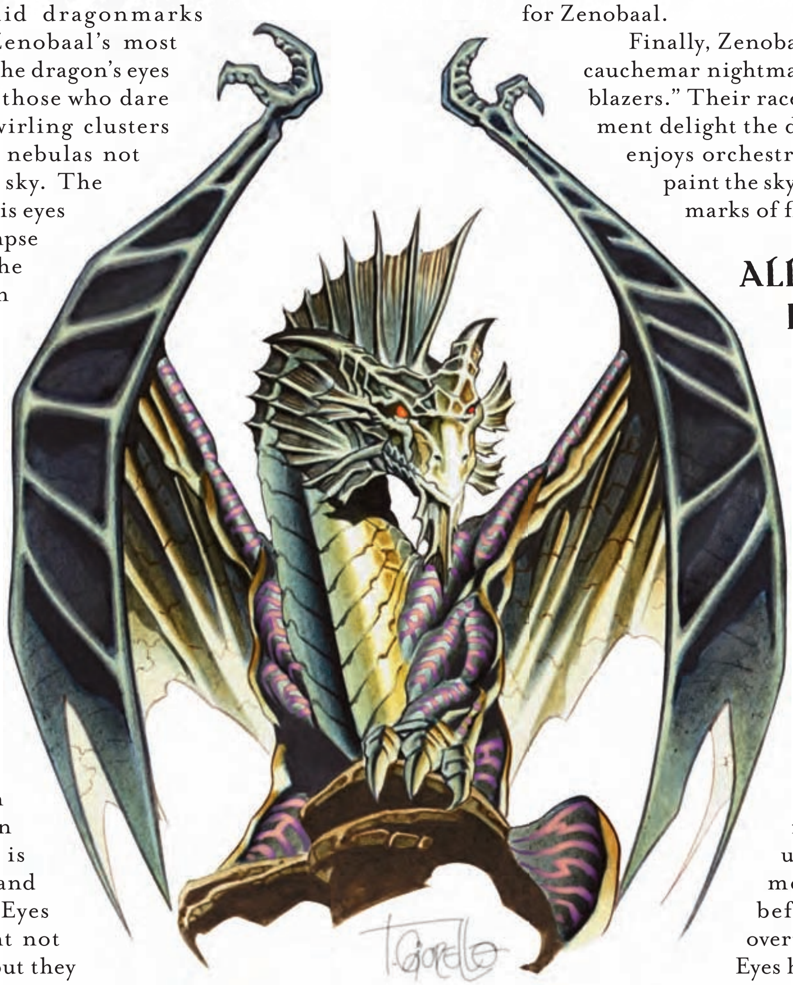
Whether the inevitability of the Prophecy slowly rotted away his ideals, or one dread discovery suddenly broke his spirit is unknown, but as a wyrm, Zenobaal withdrew from the world. The great silver dragon sequestered himself in his remote cloud citadel, repelling all visitors. Rumors claim he even rebuked an offer to join the Eyes of Chronepsis, the first to do so in ten thousand years. For a millennia no soul laid eyes on him. He remained locked within his orrery day and night. When Zenobaal finally emerged, he sealed the orrery with wards so potent they say even he cannot breach them. Many believed then that Zenobaal turned his back on the Prophecy, but the staggering truth of his motivations became apparent when the silver dragon began carving elaborate dragonmarks deep into his own hide. His markings are indecipherable even to experienced sages, and many would like to think of the marks as meaningless self-mutilation. Still, it is clear that they grant him tremendous power.

Zenobaal's mind bears scars of the Prophecy as well. Now in his citadel among the clouds, he obsessively watches other dragons for signs of those who seek to unravel the Prophecy's threads as he once did. When someone comes too close for comfort to whatever fell discoveries he protects, Zenobaal sees to their swift demise. In his heart, the Prophecy can be mastered by none other than himself. Zenobaal believes he is the Prophecy's physical incarnation on Eberron, he claims he is descended from the Progenitors, and he believes that one day the world shall end and he will see it reborn from his own flesh. Many lesser dragons scoff at his doomsday predictions, mocking the "mad, scarred dragon whose brain flew to the clouds and never came back." Other, older dragons remember the Zenobaal they knew a few thousand years ago—a peerless scholar of the Prophecy whose insights were as terrifying as they were wondrous. His contemporaries grow uneasy at Zenobaal's mention now, half saddened by the great scholar's descent into mad ravings of apocalypse, half afraid he sees a truth beyond their own grasp.

DESCRIPTION

Zenobaal is a wonder to behold. A mountain of strength, his gigantic silver-scaled form is covered neck to tail in markings whose puzzling mazelike intricacies befuddle lesser beings. The marks shed a purplish glow whose obvious power can be felt thundering in any who stand too close. The rare few who have gazed upon his dragonmarks swear to have seen terrifying visions of a dread reckoning within. They say his markings show the continents plunged below boiling seas as swirling black tempests rain green flame down from above. Much like the inconstant clouds in which he lairs, Zenobaal's markings swirl, shift, meld and dissipate, making them utterly impossible to study or understand.

Still, the liquid dragonmarks of power are not Zenobaal's most impressive feature. The dragon's eyes pierce the soul, and those who dare meet his gaze see swirling clusters of distant stars and nebulas not visible in the night sky. The untold mysteries in his eyes offer the briefest glimpse into the heart of the Prophecy, just enough to teach any who see them how little they comprehend the universe.



Zenobaal, the Prophecy Incarnate

MINIONS

Zenobaal cultivates a dangerous following of assassins and brutal killers who never stray from his commands and their immediate fulfillment. The sagacious great wyrm values subtlety above all in his minions. "When killing dragons, it is best to do it quietly and leave no trace. The Eyes of Chronepsis might not see as much as I do, but they are far from blind." Mindless thuggery is not only beneath the lofty pretense of his "role in the Prophecy," but also could draw the attention of the Eyes, whom he wishes to keep ignorant for as long as possible.

Zenobaal's most trusted servant is Jalm D'akrar, a powerful efreeti ninja trained in the shadow arts for countless centuries. Under Zenobaal's careful (and often painful) tutelage, Jalm has become far more than a mere assassin. He is a whisper of death on the wind, a dragonslayer. Most of the dragons Jalm slays never even detect the efreeti.

Jalm is a lithe, wiry-muscled efreeti whose skin is a darker crimson than others of his race. His face betrays no pain, pleasure, or any other emotion at any time. The devoted efreeti worships Zenobaal as a god on earth, and serves as if compelled by divine hand. He never questions his master's commandments and never hesitates in carrying out even the vilest tasks.

The peak below Zenobaal's citadel of clouds is home to a clan of gynosphinxes and their harems of brutish hieracosphinxes and criosphinxes. Their matriarch is Maris-kossja, a Huge 24 HD gynosphinx. Her keen wit and acumen on occasion please Zenobaal, and she has borne him a brood of half-silver dragon gynosphinxes the dragon lovingly calls the Daughters of Prophecy. His daughters are brainwashed from a young age to worship their "divine father" above all, and each would gladly die for Zenobaal.

Finally, Zenobaal keeps a herd of 101 cauchemar nightmares he calls his "Skyblazers." Their races through the firmament delight the dragon to no end. He enjoys orchestrating their frolics to paint the sky in streaking dragonmarks of flame.

ALLIES AND ENEMIES

Zenobaal's enemies might be numerous, but they are largely unaware. The Eyes of Chronepsis do their best to keep tabs on the mad Prophet, but many of them grew up with Zenobaal, or studied his brilliant theories on the Prophecy. More than a few of the Eyes once counted Zenobaal among their closest friends, or looked up to him as a doting mentor in the years before his strangeness overtook him. Most of the Eyes hold Zenobaal in such high respect that they find the idea of his descent into evil as unlikely as it is distasteful. Zenobaal is a master of manipulating his past relationships to keep the Eyes ever one step behind his evil conspiracies of murder. Few suspect he is behind the dozens of dragon deaths that occur each year, and fewer still dare accuse the mighty prophet in open forum.

The Chamber is Zenobaal's most reviled foe. He views these young idealists with a malignant mixture of sorrow and contempt. The promising among the Chamber's members remind Zenobaal of himself in his youth before he realized the unspeakable doom that awaits the world. Some days he swears to himself it is his duty to destroy these upstarts before they see the horror that lurks in the murky shadows of the future. Other days, jealousy at the Chamber's progress drives him to order the execution of their finest. Few members of the Chamber suspect Zenobaal is behind the death of their order's best and brightest. Part of Zenobaal's ability to avoid detection is the unfathomable randomness with which he strikes. Seemingly gigantic leaps in understanding the Prophecy often do not trouble the sage, while uncovering an obscure morsel of information provokes his immediate and lethal response.

The level of secrecy Zenobaal maintains and his general disdain for all other creatures makes alliance of any kind impossible. The prophet views reliance on other beings as beneath him. As the Prophecy Incarnate, he is all things, and in Zenobaal's mind all creatures on Eberron dance to his masterful schemes, even if they don't know it.

HOOKS

The PCs might draw the interest of Zenobaal upon discovering a tidbit of the Prophecy he deems forbidden, at which point the dragon sage dispatches his Daughters, or worse, Jalm D'akrar to deal with them. More than likely, Zenobaal is not the antagonist of a single adventure but the central mastermind of a campaign—a constant nemesis just out of reach of the party. Even a group of epic-level PCs could spend a decade trying to unravel the mysteries of Zenobaal before tying him to any number of heinous crimes and mustering the power to oppose him. Some possible hooks include:

Death of a Mentor: If the PCs toil in the service of the Chamber, they might suddenly arrive at their mentor's redoubt to find her vanished. Only a minuscule sliver of a clue points to any wrongdoing—an obscure reference to a "remarkable new discovery concerning the Prophecy" in her hidden chronicle of research.

Doomsday's Doom: A powerful doomsday splinter cult of the Dragon Below opposing the PCs suddenly goes silent. Their members vanish to the last, their strongholds stand vacant, and all trace of their investigations into the "oncoming apocalypse" wiped away. The cultists accidentally stumbled onto Zenobaal's "truths" and he erased them from the face of the planet.

ZENOBAAL, PROPHECY INCARNATE CR 36

Male great wyrm silver dragon monk 1/hidecarved dragon^{Dr} 9
LE Colossal dragon
Init +4; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., *greater arcane sight*, keen senses, *true seeing*; Listen +67, Spot +67
Languages Abyssal, Argon, Auran, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Giant, Infernal, Kythric, Elven, Sylvan, Syranian
Aura frightful presence (360 ft., DC 48)

AC 49, touch 8, flat-footed 49
(–8 size, +8 armor, +43 natural, +6 deflection)
hp 825 (50 HD); **DR** 25/magic and chaotic
Immune acid, cold, electricity, paralysis, sleep
Resist sonic 10; **SR** 41
Fort +35 (+4 against poison), **Ref** +29, **Will** +43; +2 against enchantment effects

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Speed 40 ft. (8 squares), fly 200 ft. (clumsy); Flyby Attack, Hover
Melee bite +60 (4d8+23) and
2 claws +58 each (4d6+14) and
2 wings +58 each (2d8+14) and
tail slap +58 (4d6+32) or
Melee bite +58/58 (4d8+23) with flurry of blows and
2 claws +56 each (4d6+14) and
2 wings +56 each (2d8+14) and
tail slap +56 (4d6+32)
Space 30 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft. (30 ft. with bite)
Base Atk +45; **Grp** +79
Atk Options Combat Expertise, Empower Spell, Extend Spell, Improved Snatch, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Quicken Spell, magic strike
Special Actions breath weapon, crush 4d8+32 (DC 40), tail sweep (40 ft., Medium or smaller, 2d8+32, DC 40 half)
Combat Gear *iron flask* (cornugon inside), *pearl of power* (9th), *scrolls of dominate monster, globe of invulnerability, prismatic sphere, protection from spells, vision*
Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 19th; 1d20+23 to overcome SR):
9th (5/day)—*imprisonment* (DC 32), *time stop*
8th (8/day)—*discern location, mind blank, polar ray* (+37 ranged touch)
7th (8/day)—*insanity* (DC 30), *prismatic spray, spell turning*
6th (8/day)—*chain lightning* (DC 29), *disintegrate* (+37 ranged touch), *greater dispel magic*
5th (8/day)—*baleful polymorph* (DC 28), *contact other plane, hold monster* (DC 28), *teleport*
4th (9/day)—*dimensional anchor, enervation* (+37 ranged touch), *greater invisibility, stoneskin*
3rd (9/day)—*displacement, fireball* (DC 26), *haste, ray of exhaustion* (+37 ranged touch, DC 26)
2nd (9/day)—*continual flame, eagle's splendor, mirror image, misdirection, whispering wind*
1st (9/day)—*charm person* (DC 24), *comprehend languages, expeditious retreat, ray of enfeeblement* (+37 ranged touch), *shield*
0 (6/day)—*arcane mark, dancing lights, detect magic, detect poison, ghost hand, light, mage hand, message, read magic*
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 19th):
1/day—*control weather, death ward* (CL 9th), *reverse gravity*
2/day—*feather fall*
3/day—*fog cloud, control winds*

Abilities Str 46, Dex 10, Con 31, Int 35, Wis 38, Cha 36
SQ alternate form, cloudwalking, wholeness of body
Feats Combat Expertise, Craft Wondrous Item, Empower Spell, Extend Spell, Flyby Attack, Forge Ring, Greater Spell Penetration, Hover, Improved Grapple, Improved Initiative, Improved Snatch^{Dr}, Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack, Overcome Weakness$^{B\ Dr}$, Power Attack, Snatch, Spell Penetration, Suppress Weakness$^{B\ Dr}$
Skills Balance +13, Bluff +56, Climb +28, Concentration +63, Diplomacy +76, Disguise +56 (+60 acting), Escape Artist +53, Hide –6, Intimidate +65, Jump +77, Knowledge (arcana) +65, Knowledge (history) +65, Knowledge (nature) +55, Knowledge (the planes) +55, Knowledge (religion) +65, Move Silently +10, Listen +67, Search +55, Sense Motive +67, Spellcraft +39 (+43 deciphering scrolls), Spot +66, Tumble +23, Use Magic Device +56 (+58 scrolls)
Possessions *bracers of armor +8, amulet of mighty fists +5, ring of protection +6, staff of life* (32 charges), *crystal ball (true seeing* and *suggestion)*

Magic Strike (Ex) Zenobaal's natural attacks are treated as magic weapons for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.
Breath Weapon (Su) 70-ft. cone, once every 1d4 rounds, damage 24d8 cold, Reflex DC 45 half; or 70-ft. cone, once

every 1d4 rounds, paralyzed 1d6+12 rounds, Fortitude DC 45.

Death Ward (Sp) As the *death ward* spell; 1/day; 9th level cleric.

Improved Snatch Against Huge or smaller creatures, bite for 4d8+23/round or claw for 4d6+14/round.

Overcome Weakness Zenobaal is no longer vulnerable to fire. This feat supersedes the effect of Suppress Weakness.

Wholeness of Body (Su) Zenobaal can cure up to 27 hit points each day and can spread this healing out among several uses.

CLOUD CITADEL OF ZENOBAAL

Far above the Wyrmsfang Jungle's highest summit sits a citadel of purple and white stone floating on a sea of billowy clouds. Tall spires of the citadel proper scrape the very pinnacle of the firmament, but the stargazing tower of Zenobaal's orrery reaches even higher. Those not acclimated to the thinness of the air at these astronomical heights take 1 point of damage to all ability scores every 6 hours unless they succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 15, +1 per previous check). Those acclimated to high altitude receive a +4 bonus on the saving throw.

Keyed Locations

The following features correspond to numbered areas on the map.

1. Ring of Clouds: This perimeter of swirling white vapor circles the central cloud island of Zenobaal's citadel. Although appearing to be an idyllic ring of milky white cloudstuff, the circle is actually composed of hundreds of Huge belkers who waste no time in dispatching anyone foolish enough to encroach on the Prophecy Incarnate's stronghold.

2. Skyblazer Range: This large area of open cloud is where Zenobaal's hand picked 101 cauchemar nightmares cavort, feed, and socialize when not commanded to produce a display of fiery aerial wonder at the prophet's whim.

3. Maze of Clouds: This cumulus cloud field is arrayed in a dizzying maze whose corridors shift and collude with the wind. When precocious intruders evade the clutches of his belker armada, Zenobaal banishes them to the maze (under a *dimensional lock*, CL 19th). Few escape. To make matters worse, the maze is prowled by thirteen 24 HD invisible stalkers who prey on the poor souls trapped here.

4. Forgotten Orrery: Here lies Zenobaal's one-time obsession, now sheathed in five ongoing *prismatic spheres* and sealed with potent wards preventing any scrying or transportation magic. Breaching the orrery's seal requires epic-level magic and a DC 80 Knowledge (arcana) check. The secrets within could be nothing more than the mad meanderings of a delusional mind, or they might hold the key to the end of existence.

5. Efreeti's Crucible: This large pocket of superheated air is where Jalm D'akrar spends his few moments of leisure, basking in scalding torrents of steam. Anyone entering takes 10d6 points of fire damage per round, and Jalm's immediate retribution for intruding on his personal demesne.

JALM D'AKRAR CR 36

Male efreeti ninja$^{\text{CAd}}$ 20/dragonstalker$^{\text{Dr}}$ 8
NE Large outsider
Init +16; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., ghost sight; Listen +26, Spot +46
Languages Auran, Common, Draconic, Ignan, Infernal, Argon, Abyssal, Mabran, telepathy 100 ft.

AC 37, touch 26, flat-footed 25; greater *ki* dodge
(–1 size, +12 Dex, +5 armor, +6 natural, +5 deflection)
hp 268 (38 HD)
Immune fire
Fort +22, **Ref** +35, **Will** +25 (+27 when *ki* uses remaining); evasion
Weakness vulnerability to cold

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares), fly 40 ft. (perfect); Flyby Attack, speed climb, great leap
Melee *+3 vorpal scimitar* +40/+35/+30/+25 (2d6+10/18–20)
Ranged *+4 brilliant energy dragon bane composite shortbow* +42/+37/+32/+27 (1d8+11/19–20/×3)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +26; **Grp** +38
Atk Options Blind-Fight, Combat Expertise, Far Shot, Improved Feint, Improved Precise Shot, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*scorching ray*), Weapon Finesse, ghost strike, heat, ignore natural armor 2/day, improved poison use, sneak attack (dragon) +8d6, sudden strike +10d6
Special Actions ghost walk
Combat Gear *potion of cat's grace, potion of cure serious wounds, ring of major spell storing (disintegrate, dimensional anchor)*
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th):
1/day—*gaseous form, permanent image* (DC 19), grant three *wishes* to nongenies
2/day—*change size* (DC 15)
3/day—*invisibility, wall of fire* (DC 17)
At will—*detect magic, plane shift* (CL 13th; with up to eight other creatures), *produce flame, pyrotechnics* (DC 15), *scorching ray* (+44 ranged touch, 1 ray only)

Abilities Str 25, Dex 34, Con 16, Int 19, Wis 23, Cha 16
SQ acrobatics (+6 to Climb, Jump, and Tumble checks), change shape, ghost mind, ghost step, hide scent, hunting bonus, *ki* power, poison use, trapfinding
Feats Blind-Fight, Combat Expertise, Flyby Attack, Improved Critical (shortbow), Improved Feint, Improved Initiative, Improved Precise Shot, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*scorching ray*), Track, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (shortbow)
Skills Appraise +4 (+6 calligraphy), Balance +14, Bluff +21 (+29 against dragons), Concentration +23, Climb +13, Craft (calligraphy) +14, Diplomacy +7, Disable Device +34, Disguise +38 (+40 acting), Escape Artist +45, Gather Information +13, Hide +42, Jump +9, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Listen +26 (+34 against dragons), Move Silently +52, Open Lock +42, Search +24 (+32 against dragons), Sense Motive +23 (+31 against dragons), Spellcraft +18, Spot +46 (+54 against dragons), Survival +30 (+32 following tracks), Tumble +23
Possessions *bracers of armor +5, +3 vorpal scimitar, +4 brilliant energy dragonbane composite shortbow* (+7 Str bonus), 20 *+5 wounding shurikens, gloves of Dexterity +8, ring of protection +5,* 20 arrows, quiver

Change Size (Sp) As *enlarge person* or *reduce person;* Fortitude DC 15.

Change Shape (Su) Jalm can assume the form of any Small, Medium, or Large humanoid or giant.

Ghost Mind (Ex) To detect Jalm with a scrying spell, a caster must make a caster level check (DC 40). If the check fails, a scrying spell that scans an area (such as *arcane eye*) works but the ninja simply isn't detected. If the spell targets Jalm specifically, the spell fails.

Ghost Sight (Ex) Jalm can see invisible and ethereal creatures.

Ghost Step (Ex) Jalm can spend 1 use of *ki* power to become invisible or ethereal for one round as a swift action.

Ghost Strike (Ex) Jalm can spend 1 use of *ki* power to strike incorporeal and ethereal creatures as if they were corporeal, or he can strike opponents on the Material Plane while ethereal. Activating this power is a move action that does not provoke attacks of opportunity. It affects the next attack made as long as that attack is made before the end of his next turn.

Great Leap (Ex) Jalm always makes Jump checks as if he were running and had the Run feat. This ability functions only if he is unarmored and carrying a light load.

Ghost Walk (Su) Jalm can spend 2 uses of *ki* power to enter the Ethereal Plane as per the *ethereal jaunt* spell (CL 20th).

Greater Ki Dodge (Ex) Jalm can expend one use of his *ki* power to cause one attack against him to miss when it might otherwise hit. After activating this ability, he gains total concealment for 1 round. This is a swift action that does not provoke attacks of opportunity. This ability supersedes *ki* dodge.

Heat (Ex) Jalm's red-hot body deals an extra 1d6 points of fire damage whenever he hits in melee, or in each round he maintains a hold when grappling.

Hide Scent (Ex) Jalm can make a special Disguise check (taking three times as long and incurring a –10 penalty) against a creature's Wisdom check to foil its ability to detect him by scent.

Hunting Bonus (Ex) Jalm gains a bonus equal to his dragonstalker level on Bluff, Listen, Search, Sense Motive, and Spot checks when using these skills against dragons.

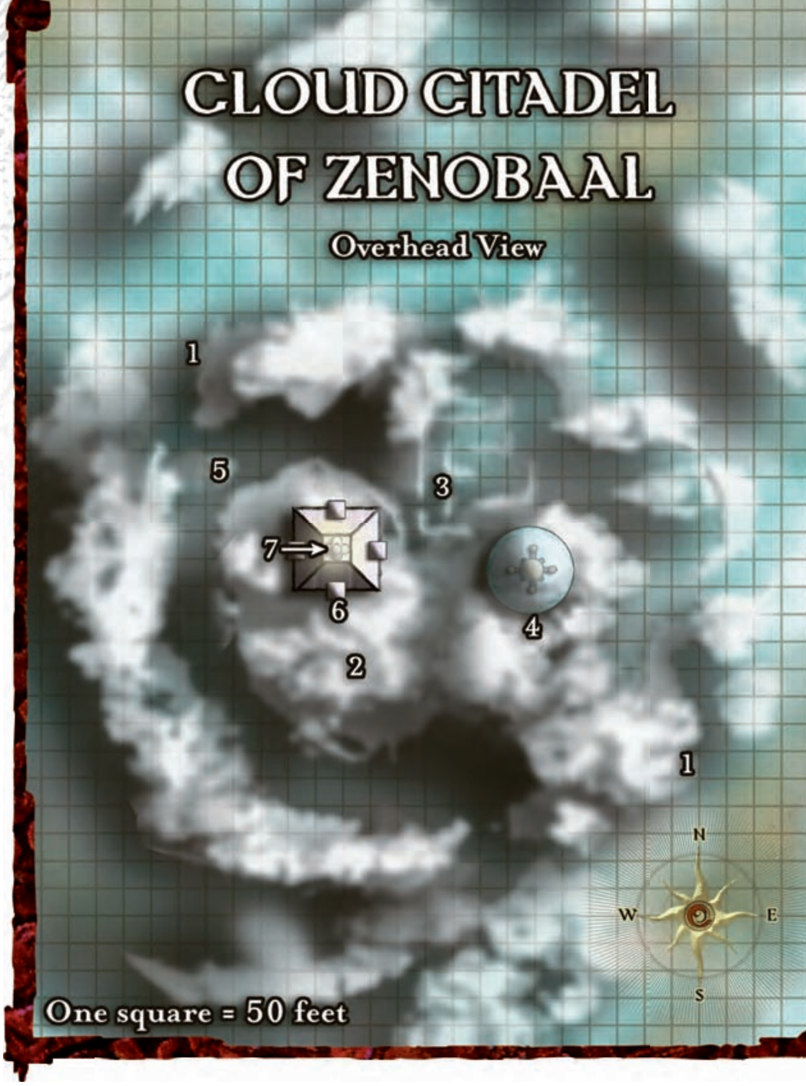
Ignore Natural Armor (Ex) Twice per day, Jalm can ignore a target's natural armor bonus (including any enhancements to that natural armor) for one attack (melee or ranged).

Improved Poison Use (Ex) Jalm does not run the risk of poisoning himself when using poison, and applies poison to a weapon as a move action.

Ki Power (Ex) Jalm can channel his *ki* 16 times per day but can only do so if unarmored and carrying a light load. As long his *ki* pool isn't empty, he gains a +2 bonus on Will saves.

Speed Climb (Ex) If unarmored, carrying a light load, and with one hand free, Jalm can climb at his speed as a move action with no penalty provided he begins and ends the round on a horizontal surface (such as the ground or a rooftop). Otherwise he falls.

Sneak Attack (Dragon) Jalm deals this sneak attack damage whenever a dragon target is denied its Dexterity bonus to AC. This otherwise functions as the rogue special ability.



Sudden Strike (Ex) Jalm deals extra damage whenever his opponent is denied a Dexterity bonus. The target must have a discernible anatomy, not be immune to critical hits, and not have concealment. A sudden strike cannot be used to deliver nonlethal damage. This damage stacks with sneak attack damage whenever both apply to the same target.

6. Citadel: This massive ivory tower's surface is etched with innumerable dragonmarks that surge with a purple radiance of power. Within, Zenobaal reclines on a white throne inlaid with silver. A crystal mirror set into his throne allows Zenobaal to use *greater scrying* at will.

7. Eye of the Tempest: This great spire atop the citadel is composed of the purest Eberron dragonshards and contains magic of awesome power. The spire responds only to Zenobaal's command, upon which it erects a shield of thunderheads around his entire domain. These tempests unleash *storms of vengeance* (caster level 20th) upon any who wander too close. Additionally, Zenobaal can command the spire to *plane shift* his entire cloud demesne to any plane of existence.

ADVENTURES IN ARGONNESSEN

Argonnessen is one of the most dangerous places in Eberron. Nondragons are unwelcome across much of the continent, and those trespassing into a dragon's dominion could be attacked without warning. Dragons aside, the continent is filled with dangerous predators, many of whom have been imported to Argonnessen specifically to pose a challenge to dragons looking for an interesting fight. A low-level character shouldn't even be thinking about going to Argonnessen. Even a swift trip—darting on to Totem Beach to make a record of etchings on the great statues—should be a daring and deadly challenge. Venturing into the depths of Argonnessen is a risk even epic-level heroes must weigh carefully.

Argonnessen is the stuff of legends. It is a place to hold out as a goal characters can aspire to achieve. When adventurers can finally set foot on the soil of Argonnessen, they should know that they are on their way to becoming legends themselves.

DEATH AND DARK MAGIC

High-Level

Ishamakhas, an outspoken member of the Conclave, was killed a month before while engaging in scholarly exploration at an ancient ossuary. Though he appears to have been overwhelmed by the undead guardians of the site, an anonymous *message* to a Conclave elder hints that the foul creatures were recent creations—undead minions of an Argonnessen necromancer bent on murder.

The wilds of Argonnessen conceal untold practitioners of the dark arts; despite centuries of effort, the Conclave has had little luck in rooting them out. In the aftermath of this brazen assault, the dragon elders hope to uncover the operations of the legendary Shadowmasters—a cabal of draconic necromancers operating on the fringes of arcane tradition. However, the Conclave believes that investigation by the Eyes of Chronepsis runs too great a risk of drawing the cabal's notice. The dragons seek outside help for this important and dangerous mission.

HOOKS

The PCs might be known to the Conclave from their adventures in Khorvaire or beyond. Any party involved in aiding (or hindering) the work of the Chamber or putting down a rogue dragon in Khorvaire or Xen'drik might have come to the notice of the Eyes of Chronepsis. Such characters could be sought out for this sensitive operation.

Alternatively, characters traveling through Argonnessen clandestinely might find themselves caught by agents of the Conclave. Sensing an opportunity, the dragons offer the PCs their freedom in exchange for service—an offer the party cannot afford to turn down.

SITES

The climax of this adventure can make use of any draconic observatory (*Explorer's Handbook* 115).

ADVENTURE

1. Dark Plots: The PCs must complete the investigation of the ruins where Ishamakhas died, dealing with the powerful undead that control the site. However, once these ancient guardians have been dispatched, the party finds evidence that Ishamakhas was not the first to visit the place. Two months past, a humanoid party came here to claim a now-missing relic—and to investigate the dragon's death.

Suggested Encounters: Zombie dragons (*Dr* 197) and skeletal dragons (*Dr* 192 and page 58 of this book) are sometimes found at ancient sites in Argonnessen, animated by the old magic lingering in such places.

2. Assassins in Seren: As the PCs follow the trail of the mysterious party at the ossuary, they uncover a plot involving a faction of Seren barbarians selling draconic intelligence to the elves of Aerenal. Even as they break up the Seren operation, the PCs find themselves targeted by assassins. Whether or not the killers are successful at taking out members of the party, clues point to their having been hired by a dragon wizard named Arstyvrax.

Suggested Encounters: The Seren enclave in the service of Aerenal can be represented by the village Mesk (*Explorer's Handbook* 96). The Seren tribes are typically much lower level than any PCs adventuring in Argonnessen, so this encounter will turn on the tribesfolk's vastly superior numbers. Alternatively, the barbarian queen Una Wyrmguard (page 66) and her warriors might be used.

3. Observatory Showdown: The PCs arrive at the draconic observatory that is the lair of the dragon Arstyvrax, only to find themselves caught in a trap. The assassins dogging them are agents of Aerenal working under deep cover in Argonnessen. Their goal—to expose Arstyvrax as a member of the Shadowmasters even as they frame him for Ishamakhas's murder.

Arstyvrax uses the observatory as cover for his forbidden studies, drawing planar energy from Dolurrh for necromantic research. The Aerenal elves assume that the party is in the dragon's employ. However, whether the PCs and the elves end up enemies or allies, Arstyvrax eventually reveals his true nature as an undead minion of the Blood of Vol. In the end, the PCs face a frenzied final battle with the vampiric dragon necromancer himself.

Suggested Encounters: Arstyvrax is detailed on page 56. His observatory lair is protected by a force of skeletal dragons (page 58) and dragonbone golems (*Dr* 164 and page 59 of this book).

The Aerenal assassins can be based on the vigilant sentinel of Aerenal prestige class (*MoE* 85), the dragonslayer prestige class (*Dr* 126), or both.

REWARDS

Whether Arstyvrax flees or is slain, the wealth contained in his observatory is a suitable reward for the many dangers the PCs have faced. As well, exposing the plots of both the Shadowmasters and the Aereni puts the party firmly in the Conclave's debt.

DEVELOPMENT

Arstyvrax is a canny foe, and he has not lived this long without learning how to back down from a fight he cannot win. The vampiric dragon cuts his losses if defeat is imminent, fleeing to heal his wounds and plot his revenge. If this happens, Arstyvrax needs a backup hoard in a secret location (hoards take the place of coffins for a vampiric dragon), and the party will have gained a bitter foe.

WAR GAMES

High-Level

As the adventurers cross Argonnessen, they unwittingly stumble into a war game simulation run by the Light of Siberys. The exercise keeps the soldiers trained and sharp, and imported monsters from the Vast add an element of randomness to the simulation while posing no real threat to the dragons. Lesser creatures, however, have more of a problem.

HOOKS

Two dragon generals, Schaisos (LG male ancient white dragon) and Nyssyeran (LN female ancient copper dragon) each marshal a force of dragons in the simulation. When Nyssyeran spots the PCs, she drafts them on the spot and sends them on a deadly mission across the battlefield. Alternatively, Schaisos could encounter the PCs first and request their aid, promising safe passage across Light of Siberys territory if they comply (and demanding they leave if they refuse).

SITES

A rocky western stretch of Totem Beach (page 48) serves admirably for the war games, and provides an opportunity to add Seren encounters.

ADVENTURE

Nyssyeran instantly sizes up the characters and recognizes their value. Monsters from the Vast add a dimension of chaos to the simulation, but an unwritten rule allows each general to make use of whatever resources he or she can find. Nyssyeran utilizes the characters' relatively small stature for an infiltration mission across the battlefield.

1. Capture the Shard: Nyssyeran explains that each general's command center contains a sparkling Siberys shard, representing the heart of their defenses. A side gains a tremendous advantage in the next game if it can capture the opposing team's shard. The shard is kept in a small stone bunker, difficult for a dragon to enter unless she uses an alternate form ability, but doing so leaves the dragon vulnerable to the monsters roaming the battlefield. Nyssyeran sends the PCs across the field to retrieve the shard and return it to her.

Before they leave, Nyssyeran warns the characters not to fly, whether naturally or by magical means. Ferocious dragons caught up in their tactics can fill seemingly empty sky in a heartbeat, and flying characters are more obvious and attract the attention of the other side (and dragon blindsense detects even invisible characters).

2. Friendly Dragonfire: None of the dragons engaged in the simulation take note of the characters; nondragons possess the same status as the mindless beasts imported from the Vast. Enormous dragons wheel and spin overhead in a dazzling display of aerial acrobatics; a few engage in mock battles on the ground. Although the characters shouldn't face direct attack from the dragons, the dragons don't watch for innocent bystanders. Roll on the table below for random effects as the characters cross the field and engage other monsters.

WAR GAMES RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

(Check 1/10 minutes, 50% chance)

d%	Encounter
01–20	Caught in red dragon breath weapon (18d10 fire damage, Reflex DC 33 half)
21–40	Dragon throws boulder, misses (boulder attacks random PC, +33 ranged attack, 2d6+11 damage)
41–60	Silver dragon breath weapon ices ground; treat as difficult terrain for 10 rounds.
61–80	Dragon lands nearby and shakes ground. Creatures within 60 feet make DC 20 Reflex saves or fall prone.
81–100	White dragon casts *fog cloud* and then moves away; *fog cloud* persists for 90 minutes.

3. Hostiles: Fierce creatures from the Vast add difficulty to the simulation, but don't threaten the ancient dragons. Characters could have a tougher time with these threats.

Prowling the battlefield currently are three truly horrid umber hulks, two abyssal greater basilisks, a battletitan dinosaur (sans barding; *MM3* 38), and an elite demon war mount mivilorn (sans armor; *MM3* 107). Numerous smaller monsters also dot the battlefield, but should pose no danger to the party.

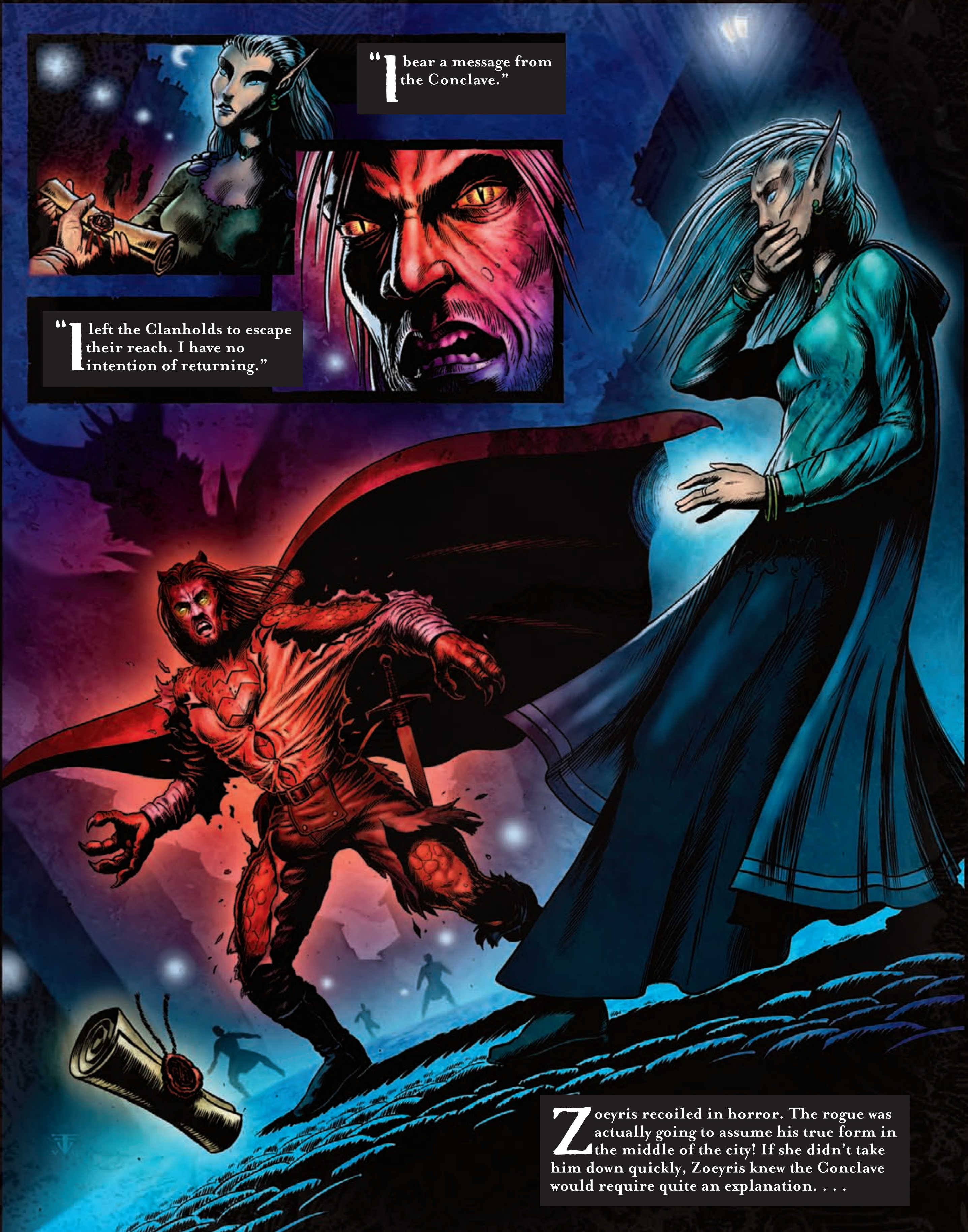
4. Rush the Bunker: An ancient green dragon circles above the bunker, which has a thick stone door sealed with a padlock (Open Lock DC 30). Combat likely proves deadly—even if the characters triumph, the other dragons on the field don't look on the murderers kindly. Clever tactics and powerful magic should allow the PCs to retrieve the shard and escape. Their best option might be to rush the bunker, grab the shard, and teleport out.

REWARDS

The characters' grateful patron shows his or her thanks by not eating the characters. Possibly they also earn safe passage through this territory.

DEVELOPMENT

If the characters perform admirably, they gain a valuable contact. Perhaps the Light of Siberys requires the characters for another "covert ops" mission in the future.


"I bear a message from the Conclave."
"I left the Clanholds to escape their reach. I have no intention of returning."
Zoeyris recoiled in horror. The rogue was actually going to assume his true form in the middle of the city! If she didn't take him down quickly, Zoeyris knew the Conclave would require quite an explanation. . . .

CHAPTER TWO

DRAGONS OF KHORVAIRE

"The house on Bleak Street? Don't go near it. Yeah, I know, it looks like a prime target. A twist of wire in the lock and we could help ourselves to all that finery you saw through the window. We might even live long enough to enjoy some of the take. Maybe. Trust me when I say leave it alone. Not everyone in this city is exactly what they appear."

—Dioban the Prudent, street thief

Khorvaire is unique among the continents in that it possesses the greatest diversity of interconnected races and societies. To grasp the structure of Khorvaire requires untangling lines of political power, racial tensions, technology levels, historical grudges and alliances, and secret and public societies. The role of dragons on Khorvaire is no less important than on other continents, but it is much more subtle.

Khorvaire possesses another quality that affects how its dragons interact: Rogue dragons favor it over all other continents. Whether they disagree with the Chamber's purpose or methodology, or fled Argonnessen in fear of their lives, or are selfish, loners, or greedy, rogue dragons find Khorvaire a hospitable land. The rise and fall of cities and the glut of races provides a shifting backdrop against which to camouflage themselves. Minions and servitors are easy to find, and the Chamber has more pressing concerns on Khorvaire than tracking down rogues. Usually.

SCALES AND FACADES

The Chamber focuses much of its attention on Khorvaire, and for good reason. Dragonmarked humanoids are common there, as are the power seats of many empires. These elements crop up frequently in the Prophecy.

Of course, nondragonmarked beings play an important role in the Prophecy too. Khorvaire boasts the greatest concentration of the lesser races, in dynamic situations and ever-changing allegiances. A Chamber agent must be intelligent and flexible to keep track of all the powers-that-be in even a single Khorvairian kingdom. The kingdom's web of allies, enemies, plots, and plans stretches and is entangled with other webs, which in turn interact with other webs, until a single action in one corner of the continent affects the entire land.

Chamber agents move slowly but inexorably. Little aside from death can sway a Chamber agent from her duty. She thinks nothing of setting plans in motion that take years, even decades, to come to fruition. An agent must also be on guard lest circumstances require her to move quickly. The lesser races act unpredictably, and an agent requires the ability to rapidly evaluate and react to a situation. An agent's talents develop over many years of dedicated infiltration, study, and observation.

To preserve the secrecy of its agenda, and out of respect for the intelligence and dedication of its members, the Chamber does not maintain a rigid structure. It always keeps watch over its members, to ensure their safety and monitor them for signs of infiltration by the Lords of Dust. The Chamber generally allows its agents to work privately, although on occasion, important assignments are given to trusted agents. Members of the Chamber usually share uncovered information with the dragons of Argonnessen, who decide how best to act on it.

The Chamber possesses this fluid structure for another reason: Its members rarely agree on how best to handle the Prophecy. Different dragons have different goals, and even those who share an objective often argue over how best to accomplish it. Some do all they can to study the Prophecy without shaping it, preferring to gather all available information before making a choice. Others pursue one particular goal, such as the destruction of a rakshasa rajah, and act to shape the Prophecy to ensure their desires come about.

The Chamber values subtlety. Older dragons of Argonnessen watch constantly, often disapproving, but don't interfere with its members as long as they keep a low profile. Agents seek to monitor and advance the Prophecy without altering it wrongly or putting themselves at risk; to that end, they work in disguise, through minions, or using magical means whenever possible.

The Chamber is powerful but unreliable. Though dragon agents often disagree on means and outcomes, they all agree that the Chamber's agenda supersedes personal goals, attachments, and even ethics. An agent might develop a working relationship with a pawn over the course of many years, then slay that pawn without a thought if she believes the Prophecy requires it. Everything is a tool or a symbol; nothing has permanence or importance but the Prophecy.

THE PROPHECY IN KHORVAIRE

Young dragons sometimes assume Khorvaire should be the focus of all Chamber activity. After all, dragonmarks tie directly into the Prophecy, and Khorvaire is home to the dragonmarked races. Even the movements of a dragonmarked individual might unveil threads of destiny: Chamber agents have spent entire decades watching a single dragonmarked individual go about her daily life. Chamber initiates learn that great revelations do not always result from great deeds; what a the bearer of a mark has for breakfast can be as vital as whether she signs a treaty or destroys a demon.

Dragonmarks reveal only aspects of the Prophecy, though. Furthermore, while dragonmarked individuals are common on Khorvaire, those without dragonmarks also have a role to play. In chess, the queen is the most valuable piece, but one cannot win without pawns. Creatures of all types on all continents have a place in the Prophecy.

This is not to say that Khorvaire isn't a vital target for the Chamber's observations, only that other targets exist. Khorvaire does possess unique properties that pique the Chamber's interest. Just as an astronomer sometimes studies a single star or the relative position of constellations, the movements of the lesser races as a whole affects the Prophecy and the future. The dragonmarked houses, of course, figure prominently. The structure of the continent plays a role, too: The Prophecy refers to humanoid kingdoms at times.

Khorvaire also features unique landmarks that allow Chamber agents to decipher and manipulate the Prophecy. References to the Mournland crop up from time to time. A fallen tower in Sharn; the Gloaming in the Eldeen Reaches; a lake of fire in the Demon Wastes; the Madstone in Karrnath—these areas and more all appear in the many fragments of the Prophecy. Some places, such as the Seven Caves in Darguun, are rumored to hold undiscovered Prophecy writings. Such rumors, no matter how far-fetched, require Chamber attention.

THE CHAMBER AND CABALS

While monitoring their charges, conducting their missions, or following their studies, Chamber agents must also keep an eye on other secret cabals in their area of Khorvaire. Such tasks are among the most demanding of their duties.

The Lords of Dust: Of all the facets of the Chamber's agenda on Khorvaire, its dealings with the Lords of Dust are the most important and the most deadly. Dragon and fiend struggle over the Prophecy and, through it, for control over the destiny of Eberron itself. To further their ends, they clash in the shadows. Both groups possess tremendous wealth, inhuman patience, and vast support networks. Even a seemingly random mugging on the street could be part of the shadow war between these ancient enemies.

Despite its loose structure, the Chamber takes steps to defend its operations against the Lords of Dust. The rakshasas have agents spread across Khorvaire, but the dragons know that the greatest strongholds of their immortal enemies are in the Demon Wastes and in Aundair. At least one Chamber agent always operates in each of these areas, monitoring them for unusual activity or ventures into Khyber. A deep-cover agent currently sits on Queen Aurala's Arcane Congress. The agent cares little for Aurala's plans (beyond their impact on the Prophecy, of course) but finds the Congress an excellent vantage point from which to watch for warning signs.

The Chamber also keeps a close eye on the Church of the Silver Flame, since the two organizations possess a common enemy in the Lords of Dust. The Church of the Silver Flame poses an additional threat in that it comprises mortals, who are preferred targets of the fiends' corruption. Chamber agents within the Church not only seek reports on Lord of Dust activity, they also look for signs of corruption in the Church itself. The agents don't end such corruption if they note it, but seek to trace the taint back to its source in hopes of trapping a minion or ally of the Lords of Dust.

The Aurum: In a sense, the Chamber and the Aurum share a goal. Both organizations gather information so that they can manipulate events and effect change in Khorvaire. The Chamber serves the Prophecy, while the Aurum acts through financial acquisition and political machinations. Over the years, Chamber agents have come to suspect that the Aurum influences politics and trade lines in Khorvaire, though they remain unaware of the true scope of the conspiracy.

Currently, at least one Chamber agent has infiltrated the Aurum and sits on the Platinum Concord. Occasional rumors suggest the existence of the Shadow Cabinet, and the agent is working to gain access to this inner circle. The Aurum, however, likewise suspects the existence of the Chamber or an organization like it. The Shadow Cabinet currently debates whether to allocate resources toward gathering more information about this theoretical organization of dragons.

Cults of the Dragon Below: How Chamber agents interact with a cult of the Dragon Below depends on the cult's organization and goals. Like the Chamber's own members, different cultists have individual agendas and go about meeting their goals in a variety of ways.

A Chamber agent could view one cult as a dangerous cabal of lunatics but care little for its operations, as long as the cultists do not interfere with vital work. Another agent might uncover a cult dedicated to releasing an imprisoned rajah, or taking other actions that could be destructive to the Prophecy. Rather than confronting the cultists directly, the agent likely hires minions to eradicate them. In some cases, a confrontation between a particular band of heroes and a cult of the Dragon Below features prominently in the Prophecy, and a Chamber agent takes pains to facilitate that showdown.

Chamber agents who operate in Khorvaire must deal with additional dangers not found on other continents. The Lords of Dust know of the Chamber's agenda and its obsession with the Prophecy. From time to time, false fragments of the Prophecy crop up. Some of these prove merely embarrassing to the Chamber, leading them astray at critical moments and diverting their attention. At worst, these false clues lead dedicated agents to pursue investigations that result in ambush.

The Prophecy reveals itself even in Khorvaire's urban landscape

ROGUE DRAGONS

Dragons possess a wide range of personalities and motivations. Though they display more racial solidarity than many other creatures, rebels do exist. Not every dragon cares for the Chamber or the Prophecy—or even for other dragons. These rogue dragons operate independently.

Rogue dragons don't share motivations or desires; their behavior is as varied and complex as the dragons themselves. However, several common themes crop up among the rogues who lair on Khorvaire: money, power, solitude, and independence.

Khorvaire's wealth is a great draw to rogue dragons. The Chamber monitors and guards its artifacts and relics carefully, but rogues take what they wish and share with no one. Powerful magic items and hidden treasure troves left over from the Last War dot the land, many hidden so deeply and so well that ordinary beings stand no chance of discovering them. Only creatures as powerful as dragons can find and claim these treasures for themselves.

Many rogues also enjoy feeling powerful and in control. On Argonnessen, greater dragons often dominate smaller, weaker dragons. When surrounded by lesser beings, though, even the lowliest dragon feels impressive. The pursuit of wealth is often combined with the lust for power. A rogue dragon might take on minions, then use them to search for greater treasures; the more wealth she possesses, the more she can expend on acquiring even greater wealth and more servitors.

Achieving a position of authority within the Chamber or the Conclave can take centuries or more. On Khorvaire, a clever dragon can set up a power structure with himself at the head in under a decade, all without risking the incredible dangers of the Vast. Dragons in the Vast, wild as they are, still play by the rules of the Conclave. Rogue dragons are true rebels who flout the "sandbox" of the Vast and the draconic authorities.

THE ROLE OF ROGUES

Rogue dragons can play several roles in a campaign. Most importantly, they serve as quintessential dragon villains. They rarely have complicated social structures, or webs of allies and enemies. They guard vast treasures, lair in remote locations, and merit no tears should brave adventurers destroy them. When the DM needs a powerful monster but doesn't want a complicated backstory or adventure structure, a rogue dragon fits the bill perfectly.

Rogues work well for any adventure that involves a dragon but avoids Chamber entanglements or Prophecy storylines. They can serve as patrons who hire characters to enter dangerous places and retrieve treasures. After the PCs complete their mission, the patron pays them (or betrays them), and that's the end of the story.

If the PCs become powerful enough to seek out dragon cohorts or require dragon allies, Khorvairian rogue dragons can become involved in party dynamics without the complications of Chamber politics and the Prophecy.

If the players find Chamber politics fascinating and enjoyable, rogue dragons work best as simple enemies and occasional NPCs.

Some rogues, though, disdain minions and intrigue. They crave solitude above all else, rejecting even the company of other dragons. These dragons could be born introverts who prefer their own company to any other. They might be criminals on the run from the authorities of Argonnessen; they could even be wrongly accused. A few dealt major damage to enemies of Argonnessen, and now lair in Khorvaire for their own safety and for the safety of the Chamber. Others nurse a secret pain, a broken heart, or shattered dreams, and cannot bear any reminder of their old life.

Finally, some dragons simply don't care for the politics of Argonnessen. They don't understand the Prophecy and don't want to. They can't comprehend why their kin care so deeply for the actions of the lesser races and the fate of the world. Some of these rogue dragons are nihilists, while others are apathetic, and many are simply selfish.

Most rogues, however, remain keenly aware that the Eyes of Chronepsis rest on them. They crave their freedom but must conduct their activities secretly or within reasonable limits, lest they incur the wrath of the Conclave. Some rogue dragons engage in destructive but subtle activities, believing they escape notice. In many cases, though, the Conclave is aware of them and is simply waiting for the proper time to take action. Sometimes the Chamber or another faction sees value in a rogue's activities and convinces the Conclave to delay interference.

Rogue dragons might live in solitude, have dragon allies or enemies, or involve themselves in the daily lives and politics of the lesser races. Each presents a unique challenge, and encountering one rogue offers no reliable information to deal with another.

TEN KHORVAIRIAN ROGUE DRAGONS

Rogue dragons, with their varied agendas and personalities, make excellent villains and contacts. Presented here are ten rogues suitable for use in Khorvaire. DMs should tailor their ages, Hit Dice, and class levels (if any) to suit the campaign.

1. Q'anhyrde (NE male red dragon): Q'anhyrde served well as a Chamber agent for almost a hundred years. His work deciphering the Prophecy and struggling to shape it eventually overwhelmed him; he declared nothing mattered but the present. Now he surrounds himself with minions and lives a life of hedonism.

2. Kauverra (CN female copper dragon): Kauverra loves her beautiful form. She desires nothing more than to preserve her magnificence and, when possible, improve on it. Several years ago she broke off a fang and used magic to fuse a diamond surrogate in its place. Now she seeks out perfect diamonds, planning to replace all her teeth with the glittering trove.

3. Moar'donn (LE male black dragon): Moar'donn hatched in a lizardfolk encampment in Q'barra; how the reptilians acquired his egg, the dragon doesn't know. Unlike their more civilized cousins, these savage lizardfolk enslaved and tormented the black wyrmling. In time, Moar'donn grew powerful enough to escape from his captors. Now only bitterness and rage lives in his heart. He ruthlessly destroys all nondragons who cross his path.

4. Meretsega (CE female brass dragon): A brush with the Lords of Dust many years ago left Meretsega crippled and near death. She lives now in a paranoid state, believing the rakshasa lords will overwhelm Argonnessen any day. Having fled to Khorvaire, she set herself up in a lair surrounded by deadly traps and guarded by *dominated* or intimidated servants.

5. The Thunder Wyrm (LN male gold dragon): Years ago, this Chamber agent came to Khorvaire and fell in love with a human woman. He left the organization to marry his love and live with her in human form. When her days ran out, the dragon retreated to mourn in solitude, and so far has not rejoined dragon society. On stormy nights he emerges to fly through the rain and roar with the thunder.

6. Ystravnil (NE female green dragon): Personality conflicts drove this dragon from Argonnessen. Ystravnil can't understand why the other dragons don't recognize her superior intelligence and grant her the respect she deserves. From her lair in Khorvaire she builds up wealth and power, determined to make a name for herself and show those fools on Argonnessen.

7. Ortak Seven-Claw (CE male silver dragon): Some say Ortak suffered a head injury in his youth, others that he came from poor stock. Whatever the cause, Ortak displays a lower level of intelligence than most of his peers, and politics annoy and frustrate him. Ortak retired to Khorvaire so that he could live out his life hunting, fighting, and gorging himself.

8. Shadewing (NE female bronze dragon): Necromancy, undeath, and the secrets of Khyber fascinate the dragon known as Shadewing. She lairs in secret, lest her more noble kin slay her for her despicable experiments and twisted morality.

9. Frigidus the Horrible (NG male white dragon): Frigidus compensates for his unusually small stature with delusions of grandeur (and self-appointed titles). The sole offspring of a rogue white dragon, Frigidus has never laid eyes on Argonnessen and would be shocked to learn that an entire continent of dragons has never approached him to offer him tribute. Although good-natured, Frigidus flies into a rage when not treated with what he considers proper reverence.

10. Fantaz the Merry (N male blue dragon): Fantaz believes that the purpose of life is enjoyment, and that the lesser races know the secret of merriment better than dragons. Fantaz lives permanently in humanoid form and spends every night drinking, dancing, and wooing beautiful ladies.

GETTING AROUND UNSEEN

A dragon who needs to move unseen through the humanoid masses has several options. Bronze, gold, and silver dragons have the easiest time procuring disguises, because they possess an innate ability to change shape. Other dragons might possess the Alternate Form feat (page 15). Usually this talent is innate and manifests shortly after hatching. In a few rare cases, a dragon develops this power through practice and meditation.

In the absence of innate ability, a magical disguise works well. Minor illusion magic such as *alter self* and *disguise self* is not much use to dragons. At most, these spells can make one appear to be a different dragon, doing little more than shunting investigations away from the Chamber in an emergency. *Polymorph* provides the perfect disguise, but its short duration renders it infeasible for all but the briefest of missions (and even then, only if the dragon possesses a wand or other item with which to refresh the spell). *Shapechange* is better suited to this purpose, but its high level and expense keep it out of the reach of all but the most powerful dragons.

Once disguised, a dragon looks for a position from which to monitor the workings of the area and individuals' comings and goings without drawing undue attention to himself. Favored choices include posing as a member of nobility, hiring on as a clerk (or rising to a supervisory role) in a House Kundarak bank, and working at a lightning rail station, airship dock, or harbor. Recently, Chamber agents have been drawn to a new industry: the news. The gnomes of Zilargo, who publish the immensely popular *Korranberg Chronicle,* often learn of important events days before the population at large does. A disguised dragon working as a reporter, scriber, or editor gains access to a constant stream of information, including tidbits and facts considered too unimportant to make it into print—but which could hold great significance to one familiar with the Prophecy.

Some dragons take a more active role, particularly in rougher settings where niceties such as noble houses and broadsheets don't exist. In a place such as Festering Holt in the Demon Wastes, for instance, a Chamber agent might pose as a treasure-hunter, explorer, or obsessive naturalist who uses the hamlet as a base of operations. Dragons who can use divine magic sometimes disguise themselves as wandering pilgrims or missionaries, settling in town to minister to the needy.

A dragon in disguise reveals his true form only in

ROGUE DRAGON PRESTIGE CLASSES

Several draconic prestige classes from *Draconomicon* can serve the purposes of the Chamber and of rogue dragons in Khorvaire.

Bloodscaled Fury: These barbaric dragons do poorly in urban settings but make fine wild denizens.

Disciple of Ashardalon: The dread influence of the Lords of Dust makes binding demons attractive only to the most corrupt or insane dragons.

Dispassionate Watcher of Chronepsis: Such observers are common on Argonnessen. On very rare occasions, one might travel to Khorvaire to witness a particularly important event's unfolding.

Elemental Master: Rogue dragons living in extreme conditions often become elemental masters.

Hidecarved Dragon: Hidecarved dragons prefer solitude or the company of other hidecarved dragons. Common on Xen'drik, they sometimes lair in remote areas of Khorvaire.

Sacred Warder of Bahamut: Sacred warders sometimes patrol areas of Khorvaire, particularly where rumors of a powerful and evil rogue dragon emerge.

Unholy Ravager of Tiamat: Unholy ravagers of Tiamat are common in the wild areas of Khorvaire, such as the Demon Wastes and Q'barra.

NONDRAGON PRESTIGE CLASSES

Minions or enemies of Khorvairian dragons might also take specialized prestige classes.

Dragon Descendant^{DM}: Disguised dragons sometimes procreate with a humanoid, either unintentionally or after falling in love. A dragon descendant's ancestor could remain on Khorvaire but likely has returned to Argonnessen or died.

Dragonmark Heir^{ECS}: Most dragonmark heirs possess enough power and responsibility to make them undesirable as lieutenants or permanent minions. Dragons value them as unwitting pawns, though, and the Chamber watches the heirs closely.

Dragonkith^{Dr}: These servants work well as cohorts or lieutenants, and they sometimes serve rogue dragons.

Dragonslayer^{Dr}**/Dragonstalker**^{Dr}: Both these classes appeal to characters who target violent rogue dragons.

Hand of the Winged Masters^{DM}: These spies and informants often work for Chamber agents.

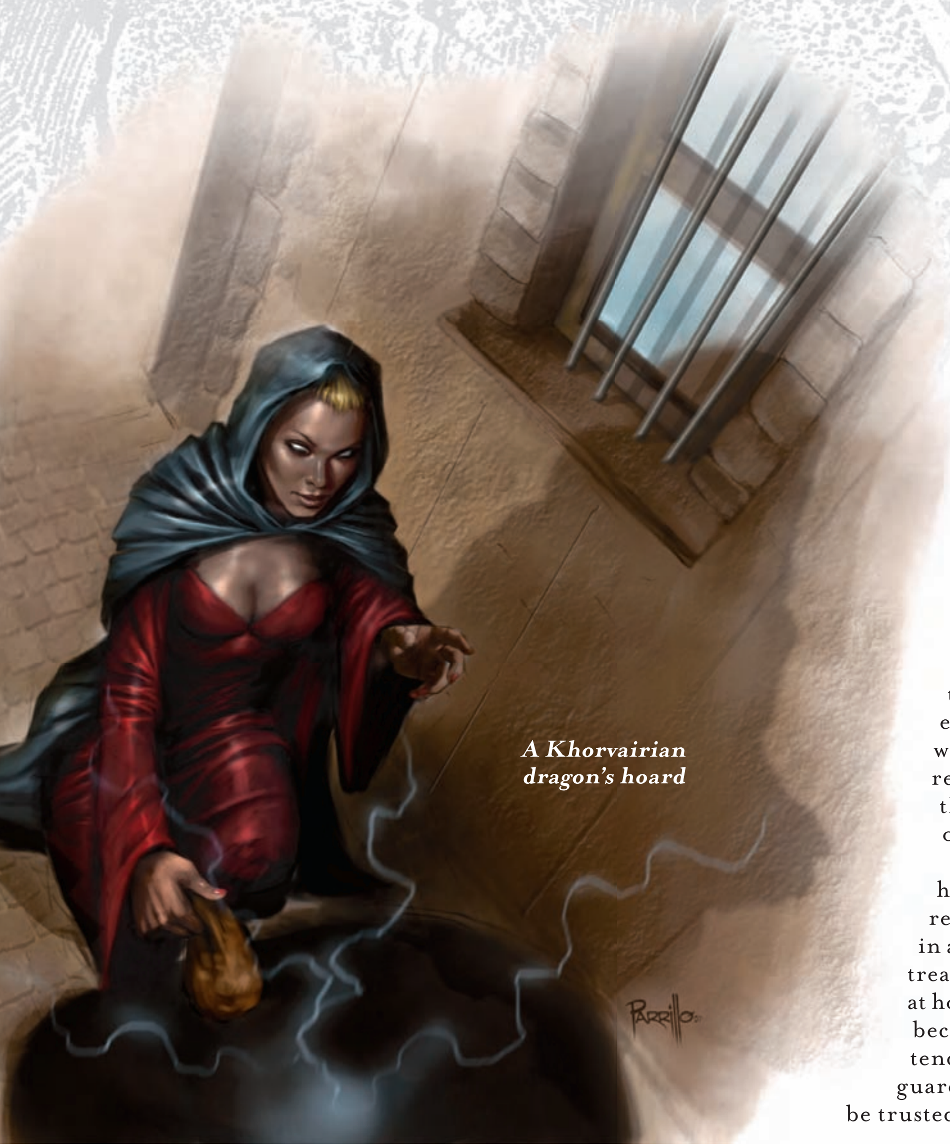
Heir of Siberys^{ECS}: Siberys marks are unpredictable and rare, and dragons remain alert for the development of an heir of Siberys. Some are content to watch, while others seek to recruit them.

Pact-Bound Adept^{DM}: Most such characters travel to far-off lands, such as Xen'drik and Argonnessen, in search of dragon masters, but a few petition Khorvairian rogues.

Platinum Knight^{Dr}: Most members of this rare class serve good-aligned dragons on Argonnessen, but a few could guard Chamber agents in Khorvaire.

Talon of Tiamat^{Dr}: Many Talons of Tiamat are expendable minions and shock troops for evil rogue dragons.

Wyrm Wizard^{DM}: Like pact-bound adepts, a few wyrm wizards seek dragon masters in Khorvaire.



A Khorvairian dragon's hoard

life-or-death situations. Publicity poses a great threat to the Chamber, and its agents can withstand great amounts of discomfort and danger without reverting to dragon form.

HOARDS OF KHORVAIRE

Chamber agents must be subtle and stealthy. Possessed of quick wits and great intelligence, they are ready to move on at a moment's notice if their cover fails or their targets switch location. A good Chamber agent can be in Sharn one day and Regalport the next. Although more independent, rogue dragons often need to be similarly discreet.

How then do they manage their hoards? Though they might disguise themselves as lesser races from time to time, Chamber agents and rogues alike remain dragons at heart. The desire to hoard is as innate in them as the need to eat. Many disguised dragons keep their hoards on them at all times.

Bags of holding, portable holes, and the like are invaluable tools for transporting large quantities of coins. One dragon might pour them out in a layer to make a comfortable bed. Another takes inventory regularly as a way to meditate and relax: Ensuring that her hoard still contains exactly the same number of coins soothes her and allows her to focus on the job at hand.

Dragon spies and Chamber agents favor quality over quantity. A bed of copper pieces might be comforting, but eighteen perfect diamonds are more valuable, more aesthetically pleasing, and much easier to transport. Magic items also fit these criteria. Some dragons wear most of their hoard. A magic ring on each finger keeps them all in plain view and very safe, even though the wearer can benefit from only one on each hand. Some dragons prefer to keep larger magic items in a *bag of holding* or the like, in case they need to change shape in response to unexpected dangers.

Artifacts and relics, of course, provide maximum value, usually for minimum size and weight. However, the Chamber prefers to keep these items on Argonnessen. Obedient Chamber agents send such finds home, where the other dragons keep them safe. On returning to Argonnessen, the agent claims the item for her permanent hoard. Rogues, of course, have no such compunctions.

A few dragons maintain permanent hoards in lairs, which can range from a typical, remote cave in a wilderness area to a hideaway in an urban setting. They carry small amounts of treasure for security and comfort, leaving the rest at home. This practice is not widespread; dragons become anxious if they leave their hoards unattended for long. Some *charm* or pay minions to guard their hoards, but hirelings cannot always be trusted.

URBAN LAIRS

The number of large urban centers in Khorvaire forces dragons to be creative when establishing lairs. Many dragons enjoy participating in the culture of humanoid races; others need to move about in cities and towns as part of their Chamber duties. Many Khorvairian lairs have unique locations and camouflage.

The most efficient and effective ploy is to hide in plain sight. Houses with large basements make ideal dragon lairs; the occupant knocks out downstairs walls to make a central chamber. The resulting space holds the bulk of the hoard and provides a relatively safe place to sleep. Owning a house also contributes to a humanoid cover identity.

A dragon with a knack for trapmaking or access to traplike spells can secure her lair with little difficulty. Other dragons might resort to hiring magewrights and locksmiths for added security; some take the added precaution of killing the professionals once the additions are complete. More restrained dragons use mind-affecting magic to alter their servants' memories or ensure that they won't speak of the modifications they made to the house.

Some dragons prefer to claim abandoned property, especially if they wish to avoid leaving a paper trail or negotiating property transactions. Many buildings that served as supply posts, barracks, or temples during the Last War now stand unused and forgotten. Some have been up for sale since the war ended, and their owners have all but forgotten about the properties. Abandoned buildings also work well for temporary lairs.

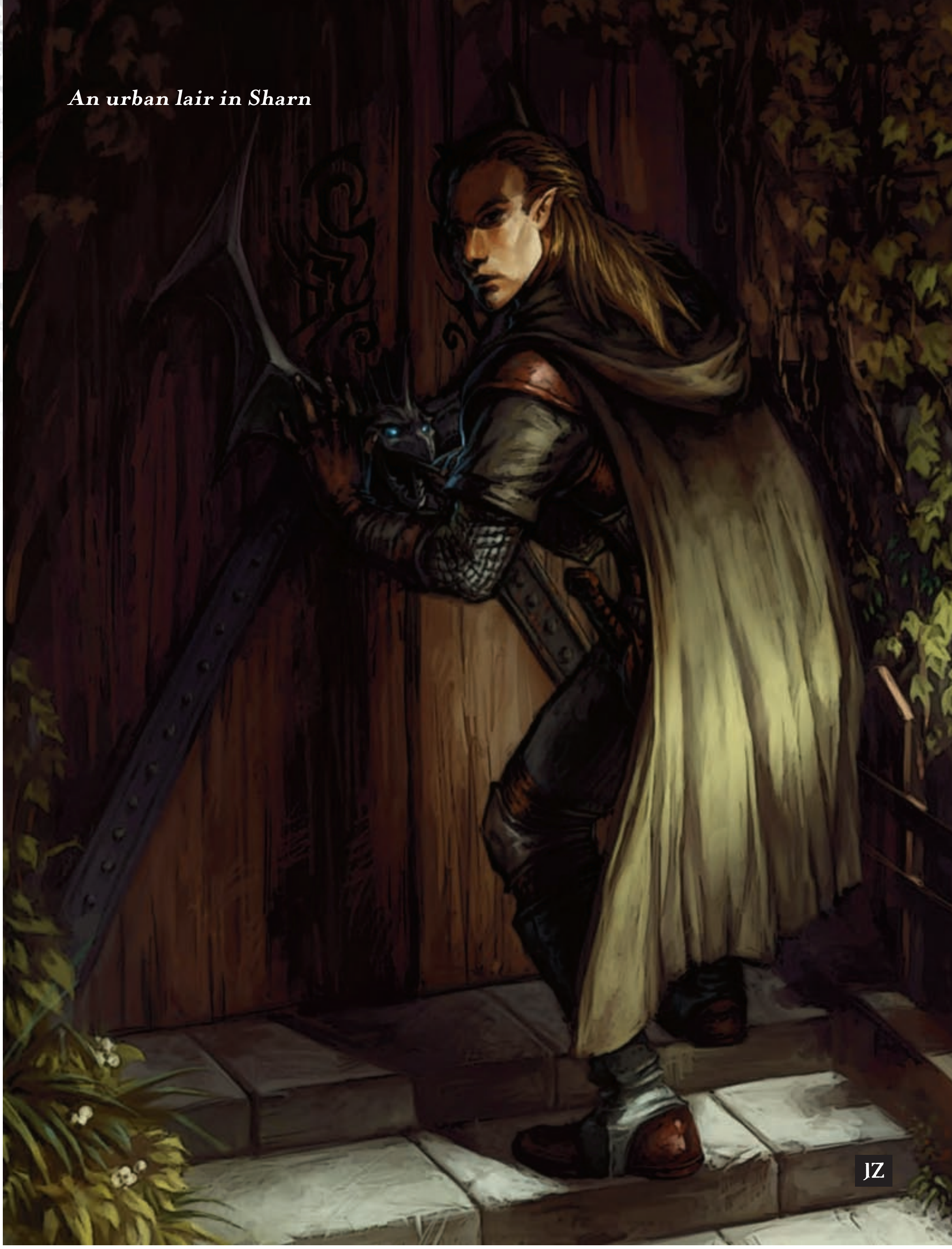
Unorthodox areas in cities and towns also make acceptable lairs; a few are suggested in the sidebar. If a dragon doesn't mind staying in humanoid form indefinitely, the options for an urban lair are nearly limitless.

PLACES OF INTEREST

Khorvaire offers a unique backdrop for interactions between player characters and dragons. The role of dragons, particularly those of the Chamber, means that PCs can possess dragon contacts and allies from the very start of their careers. They might believe their generous patron or knowledgeable university contact to be nothing more than what she seems; only after many adventures and much excitement can the PCs learn the true, draconic nature of their contact.

Rogue dragons and competing Chamber agents provide deadly high- or even epic-level threats. Few creatures in the world are as powerful and terrifying. At the same time, dragons fit into a logical ecology and social structure; adventures can focus either on slaying a vile rogue dragon, or

An urban lair in Sharn



20 Example Urban Lairs

1. An abandoned, disused cistern.
2. A famous monument's interior, secretly hollowed and modified.
3. A hidden chamber built against a vault in the city's treasury.
4. The bottom of a artificial, ornamental lake.
5. Within a buried siege engine, sunk by a *transmute rock to mud* spell during the Last War.
6. An extradimensional space in a private storage locker of a House Kundarak bank.
7. Inside the "Hall of Monsters" wing of a museum.
8. The heart of a forge—perfect for a dragon immune to fire, but not a good choice for flammable or easily melted treasure.
9. The city dump.
10. The interior of a rusting, fallen warforged titan.
11. Beneath the stage in a dance hall.
12. The hold of a ship, permanently moored at the city dock.
13. A large cell in an abandoned prison.
14. A clearing in the heart of a seemingly impenetrable thicket in a city park.
15. A senile noble's house; relatives dismiss the old man's rantings of a monster in the attic.
16. Within an abattoir.
17. The topmost level of a disused observatory.
18. An underground hot spring that feeds into a bathhouse.
19. The unused prop room of a theater.
20. Rooms beneath an insane asylum, where the dragon poses as the warden.

engaging in political machinations with a wily Chamber agent.

Dragon encounters in Khorvaire have a very different feel from those on other continents. The structure of the continent makes it easy to insert them into a campaign, but how they interact with the PCs can vary greatly. Characters can encounter dragons in many different places and through many different organizations. Even when they triumph over one draconic enemy, they should always feel that more encounters, plots, and combats remain. Draconic influence in Khorvaire never ceases, its twists and turns as complicated and infinite as the Prophecy itself.

The following entries provide opportunities for adventure and even magical locations for interesting dragon-based adventures.

Frostbreath Caverns

Deep below the earth, in the dark reaches of Khyber, frozen caves surround a temperate lake churned by hot-air vents. The heat of the lake reacts with the cold of the air and sends wisps of freezing mist drifting through the caverns. Those who descend into the Frostbreath Caverns fear the cold, but freezing to death is the least of their worries.

APPROACH

Numerous tunnels crisscross through the rock, and one leads to the Frostbreath Caverns. Finding the right tunnel amid the many wrong turns requires a DC 15 Survival check. Puffs of frigid air and patches of frost on the wall assist in locating the proper tunnel.

Twisted aberrations native to Khyber lurk in the tunnels leading to the Frostbreath Caverns. The cold mountains random encounter table (*DMG* 96) and the dungeon encounter tables (*DMG* 79–81) provide appropriate encounters for parties approaching the caverns.

The tunnel opens into a vast cylindrical cavern. A spiral ramp descends out of view. Stalactites cluster at the edge of the ramp, like giant petrified icicles. A chill mist drifts up the ramp and fills the cavern.

FEATURES

The temperature in Frostbreath Caverns hovers between –10 and 0 degrees F. Creatures within the caverns must protect themselves from the cold or risk damage (*DMG* 302). Expanded rules appear in the *Frostburn* supplement.

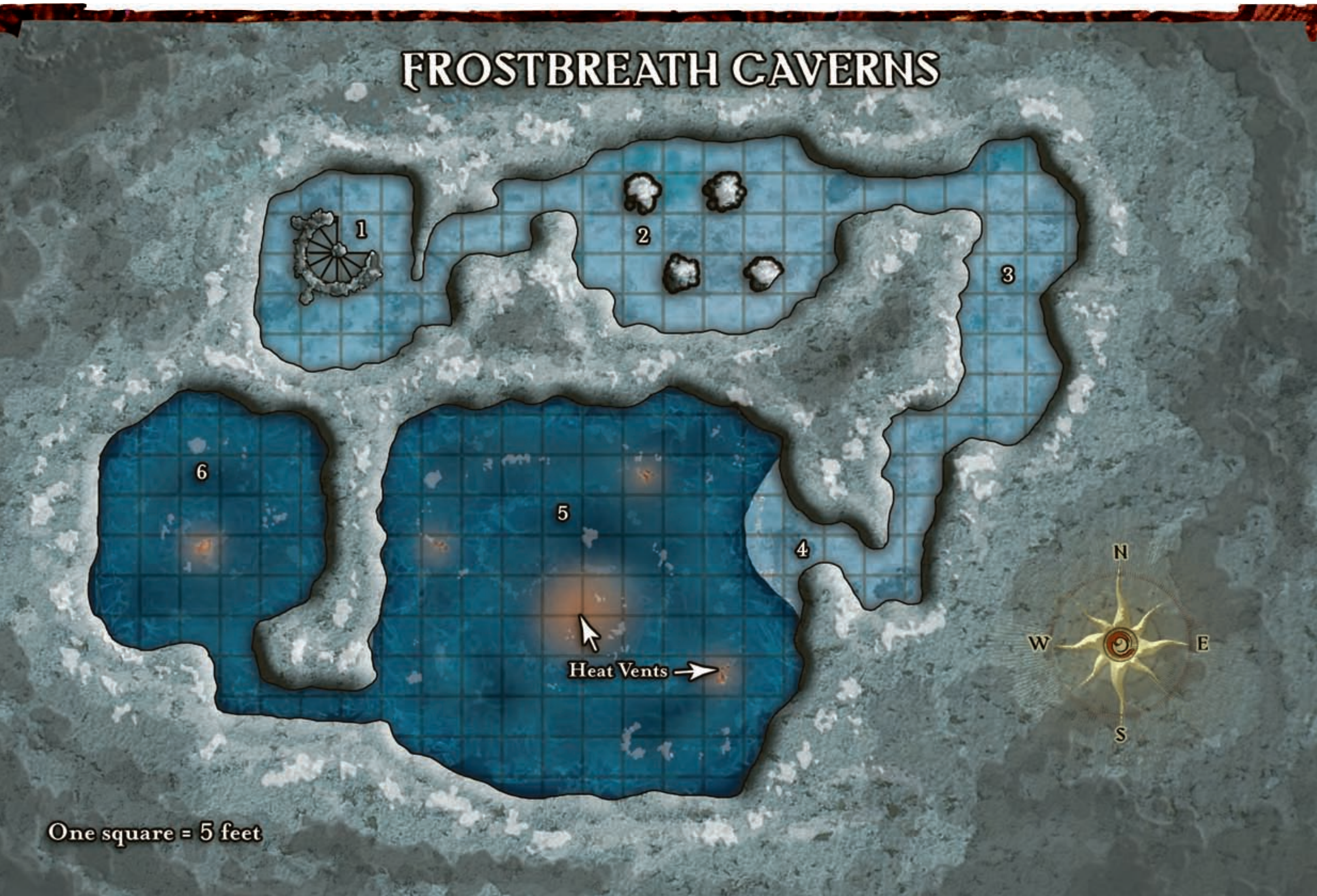
The omnipresent mist rising from area 4 suffuses every area of the caverns. The fog obscures all sight, including darkvision, beyond 10 feet. Creatures 10 feet away gain concealment.

No natural light exists in the Frostbreath Caverns.

KEYED LOCATIONS

The following features correspond to numbered areas on the map.

1. Spiral Ramp: Though stable, this stone ramp is steeply angled. Patches of ice form on the ramp, making



footing treacherous. Characters must succeed on a DC 14 Balance check to safely descend to area 2.

A character who fails the Balance check by 5 or more falls into the cavern 20 feet below. A successful DC 14 Reflex save lets her catch herself on one of the many turns or jutting stalactites.

The ramp is stable, but some of the stalactites are not. Violent activity in the area, such as combat, can shake some a stalactites loose. A 5% chance exists in each round of combat of a stalactite falling toward a random combatant. The stalactite has a +12 melee attack bonus and deals 2d6 points of piercing damage.

2. Cavern of Mirrors: Over the centuries, stalactites and stalagmites grew together in this chamber. The chill mist condensed on the pillars and then froze again, sheathing each in a perfectly round case of brilliant ice.

The four pillars in this room act like giant mirrors. Anyone bringing a light source into the room sets off a cascade of reflections that fills the room with blinding light. Every creature in the room must succeed on a DC 10 Fortitude save or become dazzled. Sightless creatures, as well as creatures already dazzled, are not affected.

3. Corridor of Ancient Jaws: This wide corridor displays an awesome relic halfway along its length: a partially preserved tyrannosaurus, frozen into the wall. Most of the giant beast's body is encased in the ice-covered stone, but its head and one of its arms stick out into the corridor, jaws open in a death grin. The cold environment effectively mummified the exposed flesh.

A past or present master of the Frostbreath Caverns cast *animate dead* on this fossil to create a zombie. The undead horror remains trapped in the wall, venting its hatred on any living creature that passes by. The tyrannosaurus zombie uses the statistics for the gray render zombie (*MM* 267) and can use its bite attack only. The zombie's reach is indicated on the map.

Anyone approaching the tyrannosaurus zombie can make a DC 20 Spot check to notice the monstrosity is animated.

4. Frostbreath Lake: This cavern boasts a vast, bubbling lake that laps against a rocky shore. The strangely warm water interacts with the frigid air to generate roiling billows of mist off the lake. Chunks of ice bob gently on the lake's surface, giving it the appearance of a giant bowl of steaming stew. The mist forms ice on the cavern roof. Eventually it grows heavy, breaks off, and lands to float in the lake, where it gradually melts and becomes mist, perpetrating the cycle.

The lake's temperature hovers at about 65 degrees F, and the water is usually calm. If combat occurs in the water, though, it becomes rough. Refer to the swim rules (*PH* 84) and underwater combat rules (*DMG* 92–93).

Two of the floating ice chunks in the lake aren't ice at all, but cunningly made blocks of glass and crystal. These hollow blocks measure 1 foot across and weigh 10 pounds each, and each possesses a hinged, locking lid. A successful DC 15 Search check locates the lid, and a DC 25 Open Lock check is required to unlock it. The interior of each block is an extradimensional space that acts as a *type II bag of holding*. (The contents are left to the DM's discretion.)

A character who investigates the blocks of ice can make a DC 20 Search check to discover these floating safes.

5. Heat Vent: A natural hot spot exists on the lake's bottom, where hot gas vents into the water. This feature makes the lake slightly warmer than the surrounding cavern. At the bottom of the lake, the temperature warms to almost 70 degrees. Clusters of bubbles streak upward, forming 5-foot-tall jets that afford concealment to any creature floating behind them.

6. Underwater Cavern: A wide tunnel leads from the lake to a second water-filled cavern. Small, sharp stalactites and stalagmites stud the walls of this cavern. Anyone bull rushed into the spikes takes 1d6 points of piercing damage.

A single large heat vent sits in the center of the floor and spews a swirling column of bubbles that reaches almost to the ceiling. Crystals that resemble topaz cluster around the vent. These are sulfur deposits, making the water in this chamber taste metallic and unpleasant. Khyber dragonshards have formed inside the vent, 8 inches down, but the narrow opening allows only a Small or smaller character to reach in and attempt to pull them out. Doing so requires a DC 15 Strength check. Creative players might devise alternate ways to extract the dragonshards.

On the far side of the chamber, two raised shelves form a comfortable lair. The lower shelf houses stone chests and large art objects—those that don't take damage from being submerged—while the upper shelf acts as a bed. Any dragon who lairs here likely spreads a cushion of coins and gemstones along the shelf on which to sleep.

FROSTBREATH CAVERNS ENCOUNTERS

(Check 1/hour, 8% chance)

d%	Encounter	EL
01–15	Nine-headed cryohydra (*MM* 157)	10
16–30	Snowflake ooze (*MM3* 161)	5
31–45	Mature adult white dragon (*MM* 77)	12
46–60	1d6 frost salamanders (*MM2* 107)	7–12
61–75	1d4 winter wolves (*MM* 256)	5–9
76–90	2d8 whitespawn hunters (*MM4* 158)	6–10
91–100	Frost giant (*MM* 122)	9

THE LIBRARY OF HIDDEN KNOWLEDGE

Locals claim the library's name refers to the innumerable texts written in obscure languages, the heaps of books with no organizational system, and the librarian who speaks in riddles. The appellation actually refers to the library's curious ability to hide away knowledge, objects, and creatures.

APPROACH

A stone bridge spans an empty canal filled with weeds and rubble. Beyond the bridge, a narrow lane stretches half a block and ends at a building that seems ready to fall apart. Cracks and chips mar the facade, and two gray stone pillars flank the door. The pillars represent female humans holding up an archway, their faces worn away by wind and weather. The archway bears an inscription: "The Library of Hidden Knowledge."

The door between the pillars groans when opened. No windows afford vision within, though a glass cupola, marred with bird droppings and water spots, tops the building.

FEATURES

Only when the librarian leaves on a rare, brief errand does he lock the front door, and even then the lock is very simple (Open Lock DC 20). The glass cupola isn't designed to open. The thin glass panes have a hardness 1 and 1 hp. Anyone in the library hears shattering glass if someone breaks the cupola.

IMPORTANT FEATURES

No detailed map is provided for this location. The placement of the following features is at the DM's discretion.

Archives: Archival rooms make up the bulk of the library. A half-dozen chambers on the main floor, plus three in the basement, contain stacks of parchments, piles of scroll cases and folios, cases full of dusty books, and bins of rolled maps.

MAGICAL LOCATION: THE LIBRARY OF HIDDEN KNOWLEDGE

As a magical location, The *Library of Hidden Knowledge* can exist in any city setting. Locals probably avoid the place, but heroes might come upon it by chance, or when seeking out an area in which they can do research.

Lore: Characters can gain the following pieces of information about the *Library of Hidden Knowledge* by making Knowledge (arcana) checks at the appropriate DCs, as given below.

DC 10: The *Library of Hidden Knowledge* contains a great many ancient texts, folios, and monographs not found anywhere else in the land.

DC 15: The library's name comes from the haphazard organization of its material, as well as its eccentric and often incomprehensible librarian.

DC 25: Though it contains many valuable items, the *Library of Hidden Knowledge* never attracts burglars. Anyone interfering with the library disappears or turns up dead.

DC 30: Researchers sometimes enter the library and vanish for days or even weeks at a time.

Description: See the main text.

Prerequisite: To gain the benefit of the *Library of Hidden Knowledge,* a creature must be literate, possess an Intelligence score of 10 or greater, and have at least one rank in at least one Knowledge skill.

Location Activation: A creature that meets the library's prerequisites must spend at least 24 hours studying within, over a period of time no longer than a week. The creature need not study continuously, but cannot leave the library or engage in any strenuous or mentally taxing activity (such as scribing scrolls or creating magic items) during this time.

Recharge: A creature can benefit from the library's gift once for every Knowledge skill in which it has ranks. However, doing so is extremely dangerous: The creature's will weakens, and more and more it desires to do nothing but study here. The Chamber has no wish to retain multiple Librarians, though, so it discourages researchers from spending more than a few days at a time within the building.

Special Ability (Ex): A creature that fulfils the library's requirements gains a special ability based on the Knowledge category studied, as described below.

Each time a creature receives one of these bonuses, it must make a Will save (DC 10 + the number of times it has received a bonus within the last year). Failure means the creature takes a –2 penalty on all Charisma-based skill checks and feels an irresistible urge to remain and study in the Library. Only brute force or magic can compel it to leave the Library. This is a mind-affecting compulsion effect.

Arcana: Use *read magic* at will as a spell-like ability; caster level equals character level.

Architecture and engineering: Gain an automatic Search check to detect a secret door when passing within 5 feet of it, as if actively searching for one.

Dungeoneering: Use *detect poison* at will, as a spell-like ability, on any vermin or plant that naturally lives in an underground environment. Caster level equals character level.

Geography: When in aboveground, rural areas, gain a +1 circumstance bonus on attack rolls.

History: Gain a +2 bonus on bardic knowledge checks, lore checks, and other similar abilities.

Local: Gather Information checks take half the usual time (1d2+1 hours).

Nature: Use *pass without trace* once per day as a spell-like ability; caster level equals character level.

Nobility and royalty: Gain a +2 bonus on Craft or Forgery checks made to duplicate heraldic symbols or family seals, crests, or sigils.

The Planes: Gain a +1 bonus on Intelligence checks made to avoid the negative effect of casting *contact other plane*.

Religion: Use *detect chaos/evil/good/law* three times per day as a spell-like ability; caster level equals character level.

Duration: The bonuses, penalties, and the compulsion last for 1 month.

Aura: Strong abjuration.

Ability Value: 2,000 gp per affected creature.

LIBRARY OF HIDDEN KNOWLEDGE ENCOUNTERS

(Check 1/hour, 12% chance)

d%	Encounter	EL
01–15	Typical House Sivis scribe (*ECS* 238)	5
16–30	Typical Chamber observer (*ECS* 229)	14
31–45	1d2 5th-level wizards (*DMG* 125)	5–7
46–60	Juvenile gold dragon in humanoid form (*MM* 84)	11
61–75	5th-level artificer (*Sh* 173)	5
76–90	1d4 typical Wayfarer explorers (*ECS* 247)	8–12
91–100	Gynosphinx in disguise (*MM* 233)	8

The haphazard bookkeeping renders research in the library difficult. A character must spend 1d4 hours searching for the proper materials before she can begin research. With a successful DC 20 Diplomacy check, a character can coax the Librarian into assisting with the search; locating the materials takes half the usual time. Knowledge checks made with access to the appropriate research materials gain a +4 circumstance bonus.

The Librarian: If the Librarian (N male human expert 7) has a name, he's forgotten it. A thin, pale man who moves with slow deliberation, the Librarian never leaves his sanctuary unless truly desperate. His regulars bring him food and new research material whenever they think of it.

When the Library of Hidden Knowledge was first built, the Librarian was a young man devoted to research. He was also a player in the Prophecy, though he bore no dragonmark himself. A Chamber agent learned of the Librarian's existence and set him up in this strange place. He serves to maintain the storehouse of knowledge, preserve documents, act as a watchdog when Chamber agents are called away, and conduct research considered too menial and tedious for the agents who lair in the library.

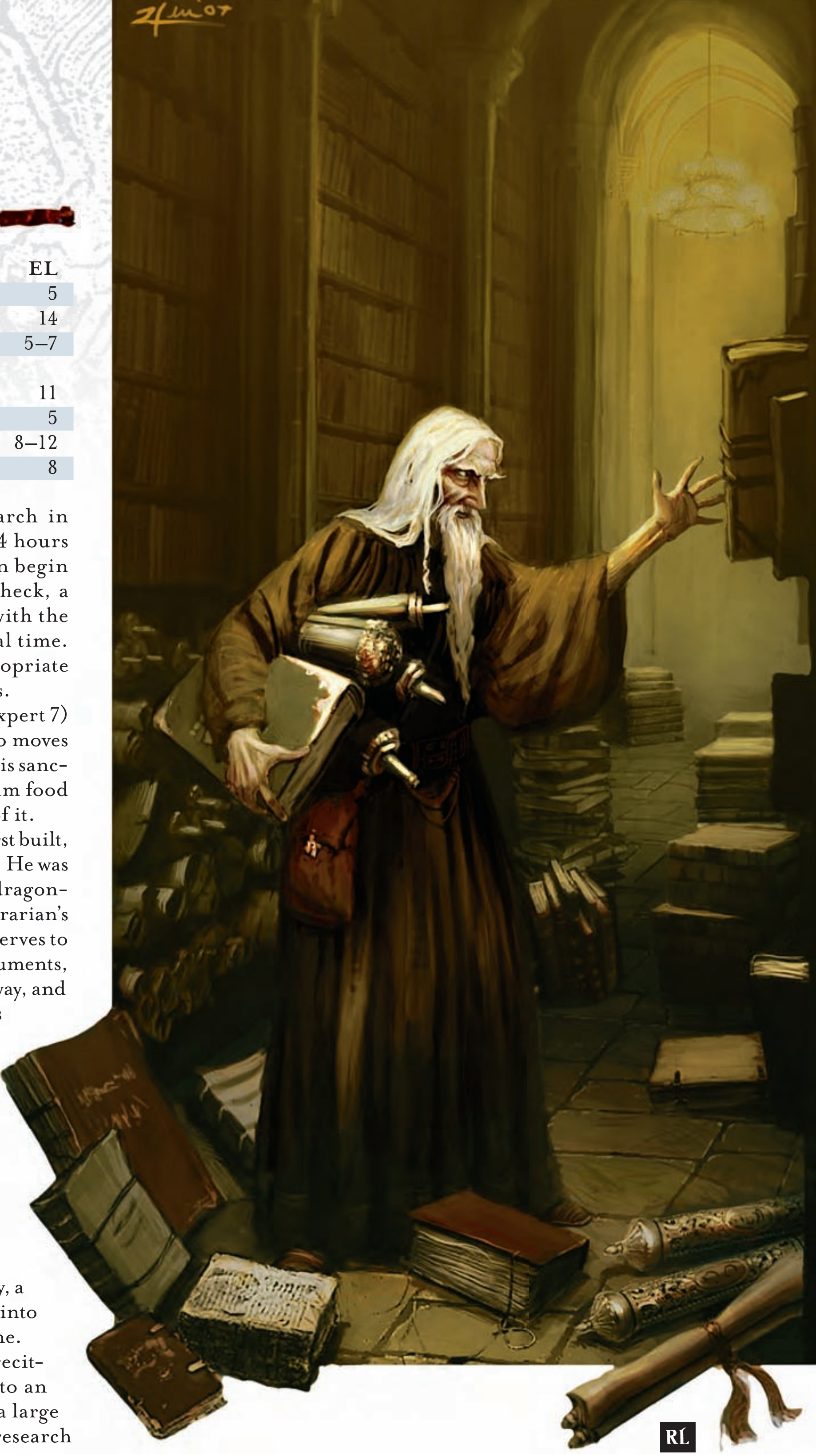
The Librarian wants to understand the workings of existence. In his own way, he struggles to comprehend the Prophecy, though he lacks the tools to unlock even its simplest secrets. He studies relentlessly, but in vain. He speaks in fragmented sentences and makes frequent use of extended metaphors. Conversations with the Librarian last only a few minutes before he grows restless and returns to his studies.

The Spined Lairs: In a back room of the library, a shelf holds four thick tomes. A draconic rune, faded into near incomprehensibility, adorns each book's spine.

The runes are command words. Anyone reciting the word while opening the book is drawn into an extradimensional space inside the book. Each is a large room that contains basic furnishings and a small research area or laboratory. Chamber agents refer to these temporary homes in the library as "spined lairs."

Huge or smaller creatures fit comfortably inside each room. A second book sits on a shelf inside each extradimensional space; opening it and reading its command word shunts the speaker back outside the book (or to the nearest open space if the book is in an enclosed area). Anyone who opens a book without speaking the command word finds dull treatises on common plants and animals of Khorvaire.

Each book possesses a hardness of 5 and 25 hp, due to strengthening enhancements laid upon them. If a book is destroyed, it explodes in a shower of arcane energy that deals 10d6 points of damage to anyone within 5 feet (Reflex DC 20 half). Anyone inside the extradimensional space appears next to the destroyed book, along with any items brought into the lair (the furniture and decorations within the book are part of the dweomer and are destroyed when the book is).



The Library of Hidden Knowledge keeps its secrets from all but the most dedicated researchers

Mystic Glade

Deep in an unnamed forest exists a glade rumored to hold great power. Legend tells that the dragon Vvaraak once spread druidic teachings from this glade, over sixteen thousand years ago. Although not as holy a site as Vvaraak's Cave, which lies somewhere in the Shadow Marches, the Mystic Glade still bears the touch of the Prophecy.

APPROACH

Paths twist through the forest, but none lead directly to the Mystic Glade. The trails fork, branch, and double back. The thick forest canopy blocks out the stars, affording only an occasional glimpse of the sky, which makes navigation difficult.

A pilgrim can find the way to the glade with a successful DC 25 Survival check. Creatures with the woodland stride ability find the paths easy to traverse and instinctively choose the correct fork; they need only succeed on a DC 20 Survival check. Forest creatures and wild animals unerringly confront travelers with ill intentions or greedy hearts, disrupting their progress.

One path, in no way discernible from the others that wind through the forest, opens up into a shadowy glade. A group of three majestic trees with metallic bark stand at the northern edge of the glade, a bubbling brook trickling from their roots.

FEATURES

The Mystic Glade, suffused so often with druidic magic while the Scaled Apostate conducted her lessons, bears an aura of nature's power still. Creatures in the glade cast druid spells at +1 caster level. No matter the time of day outside, within the glade it's always twilight. The stars, moons, and the Ring of Siberys seem twice as large

Magical Location: The Mystic Glade

No one knows the exact location of the *Mystic Glade,* but it likely exists in the Shadow Marshes or the Eldeen Reaches. Even those who have found the glade before can have difficulty locating it on subsequent visits.

Lore: Characters can gain the following pieces of information about the *Mystic Glade* by making Knowledge (religion) checks at the appropriate DCs, as given below.

DC 15: The glade is one location where Vvaraak, also known as the Scaled Apostate, taught the principles of druidic magic to Gatekeeper orcs over ten thousand years ago.

DC 20: Gatekeeper druids find the Glade hospitable, and the waters there have healing powers. Creatures opposed to the Gatekeeper philosophy have difficulty approaching the glade.

DC 25: Three bronzewood trees grow in the glade.

DC 30: The glade offers valuable insights to Chamber agents and others who seek to understand the Prophecy.

Description: See the main text.

Prerequisite: To gain the benefit of the *Mystic Glade,* a creature must possess an Intelligence of 12 or higher and at least 10 ranks in Knowledge (arcana).

Location Activation: A creature that meets the *Mystic Glade*'s prerequisites must spend at least 72 hours in the glade, meditating and studying the patterns that appear there. Each day the creature must make a DC 25 Knowledge (arcana) check to decipher these patterns. If any check fails, the creature misinterprets the Prophecy and leaves the glade with a false understanding of the future. If all three checks succeed, the creature draws a connection between the patterns in the glade and the patterns in the world, and a part of the Prophecy is revealed.

Recharge: A creature can visit the *Mystic Glade* once per year to gain its unusual perspective.

Special Ability (Ex): A creature that fulfils the glade's requirements gains a new understanding of the Prophecy. It becomes aware of a specific role it is to play in the Prophecy; fulfilling this role advances the creature's personal goals or the Chamber's efforts. A cataclysm mage (*EH* 58) can benefit from both a personal prophecy and a prophecy from the mystic glade at the same time.

To determine a creature's prophecy, roll on the following table. A prophecy cannot be repeated; if the roll produces a duplicate result on later visits, roll again. DMs can substitute their own ideas for the prophecies noted below as desired.

MYSTIC GLADE PROPHECIES

d12	Prophecy
1	Pluck the remaining eye from the one-eyed dragon.
2	Climb a mountain peak and watch the ascent of all twelve moons.
3	Sing a song of mourning at an enemy's funeral.
4	Stand on the shore of Sarlona, where Lhazaar launched her voyage.
5	Feed a dinosaur from your hand.
6	Be struck by lightning.
7	Descend into Khyber and return with a dragonshard.
8	Compliment a hag to her face.
9	Weave a vest of nettles and wear it in the presence of a king.
10	Craft a shield out of a red dragon's scales.
11	Pilot an airship during a storm.
12	Build a monument of pebbles, one pebble for each creature that met death at your hands.

Once a creature fulfils its prophecy, it gains the ability to influence reality. It can use *limited wish* as a spell-like ability (caster level 13th) and can use this ability only once per prophecy fulfilled.

Duration: A creature cannot gain a new prophecy from the *Mystic Glade* until it has fulfilled its current prophecy.

Aura: Strong abjuration.

Ability Value: 4,000 gp per affected creature.

MYSTIC GLADE ENCOUNTERS

(Check 1/hour, 12% chance)

d%	Encounter	EL
01–15	Tendriculos (*MM* 241)	6
16–30	Typical Chamber observer (*ECS* 229)	14
31–45	Shambling mound (*MM* 222)	6
46–60	2d4 dryads (*MM* 90)	5–9
61–75	1d3 typical Gatekeeper initiates (*ECS* 241)	4–7
76–90	Splinterwaif knave (*MM3* 165)	6
91–100	Dire bear (*MM* 63)	7

and bright when viewed from here, and the heavenly bodies constantly rearrange themselves in patterns that resemble dragonmarks.

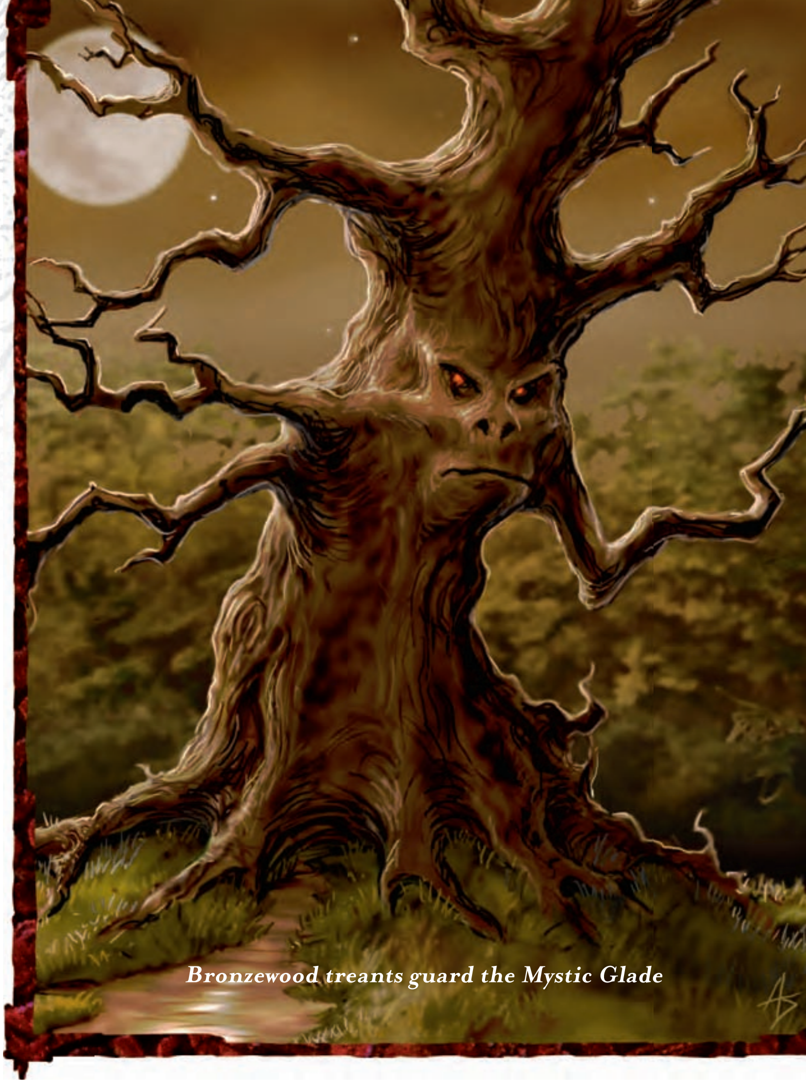
IMPORTANT FEATURES

No detailed map is provided for this location. The placement of the following features is at the DM's discretion.

The Glade: The glade measures 80 feet across and is almost perfectly circular. Grass and wildflowers cover the unusually flat and even ground. Though verdant, the grass is rough and uneven, and the wildflowers grow in wildly colored clumps. A constant soft breeze stirs the flowers, shaping and reshaping their dancing heads into Prophecy marks.

The Three Trees: Three immense bronzewood trees stand in the northern part of the glade, nonnative to this region but flourishing. Whatever the season, the trees' leaves display a variety of fall colors, and some hues not seen in nature. The leaves rustle in the ever-present breeze, and whispers suffuse the glade, vague sentences that tease the edge of hearing and speak of destiny.

The bronzewood trees are worth a fortune, but powerful magic guards them. Anyone who tries to harvest the towering plants faces three angry treants when the bronzewoods animate. Gatekeeper druids who serve the order well and selflessly might sometimes be allowed to take a branch from the bronzewood trees to fashion a weapon or piece of armor; such branches come easily away from the trees and regrow in 24 hours.



Bronzewood treants guard the Mystic Glade

3. The Brook: The bubbling brook that erupts from the bronzewoods' roots is always fresh and pure. Tiny pebbles on the brook's bed constantly shift and rearrange in the current, forming mystic patterns. The brook dwindles and sinks into the ground shortly after it leaves the glade.

Gatekeeper druids who drink from the brook gain the benefit of *cure light wounds* and a *remove disease* (caster level 5th). The water loses this property if removed from the brook.

THE TWO ASPECTS OF THE GLADE

The Mystic Glade possesses two distinct aspects. As the site of Vvaraak's teachings, it retains a special significance for Gatekeepers. The glade itself is one of nature's bastions; it repels blight and disease and always seems healthy and verdant. Druids find the glade a peaceful, safe haven in which to meditate or simply retreat from the civilized world.

The Mystic Glade also plays an important role in the Prophecy. It reflects Prophecy marks in every leaf and blade of grass. The Chamber values the glade for this reason, as does anyone who wishes to decipher and influence the Prophecy. In this role, it behaves as a magical location (see sidebar).

Are these two aspects related? Some Gatekeepers theorize that Vvaraak chose the glade as a teaching place because of its magical qualities. Some wonder if Vvaraak's actions changed the world so fundamentally that her very presence shaped the Mystic Glade, creating a visual representation of the myriad strings of the Prophecy.

THE SEA CAVES

Sheer cliffs rise above a small coastal town, sheltering the townsfolk from harsh weather. Midway up the cliffs, an amazing sight meets the eye: a sailing ship lies dashed against the cliff, its shattered hull resting on a natural ledge. Below it, the debris of several rowboats and hanging nets festoon the cliff face, as if held there by an invisible hand. A terrible storm many years ago flung the ships onto the cliff like toys, and they remain caught on the rocky outcroppings and narrow ledges. The cliff's inhabitant makes sure the ruined ships remain where they hang.

This remote lair works best for a solitary rogue dragon. However, a Chamber agent might possess an interest in the nearby town, or some hidden Prophecy lore buried in the sea. A dragon might also have once lived here but since moved on or died, and now other creatures make their home in the sea caves.

APPROACH

Ages ago, some indigenous race scaled these cliffs by means of a stone switchback. Time and tide eroded the switchback to dangerous narrowness, and townsfolk use a smoother, straighter path to ascend the cliffs when they need to (which is rare).

PCs can ascend the switchback by succeeding on five DC 12 Balance checks. A PC might also attempt to scale the cliff; doing so requires a DC 10 Climb check. The cliff is 120 feet high, but 80 feet up the shattered sailing ship affords shelter.

A jagged hole in the ship's hull allows Medium or smaller creatures to pass through easily (Large creatures must squeeze). The ship rocks and creaks ominously when entered, but a character who succeeds on a DC 20 Spot check notices that pitons pin the ship to the cliff face; there is no danger of it falling. The cliff's inhabitant uses the ship as a primary entrance, climbing out at night or while invisible.

Nets hanging from the shattered rowboats (similarly pinned in place) hide the caves' second entrance, a wide hole that a Huge or smaller creature can easily pass through. The switchback doesn't afford access to this entrance—characters who wish to investigate must climb, fly, or find some other means of approach.

FEATURES

Waves continually pummel the base of the cliff and send booming echoes through the caverns, imposing a –2 penalty on all Listen checks. The caverns and tunnels are dim and dank, smelling of fish and salt.

Barnacles cover the floor of the tunnel connecting areas 2 and 3 and the one connecting area 5 and 6. These sharp-plated crustaceans act as caltrops and potentially injure anyone walking down the tunnel. Individuals with 3 or more points of natural armor are immune to this effect.

KEYED LOCATIONS

The following features correspond to numbered areas on the map.

1. Shattered Ship: The *Gray Nelly* was sailing along the coast, hoping desperately to find a lighthouse, in one of the worst storms of the century. A monster tidal wave dashed the ship against the cliff. There were no survivors.

Now the ruined, abandoned ship serves as an entry point to the caves. Anyone climbing into the hull sees another hole on the other side of the ship, leading into a large cavern in the cliff face. The ship's floor, tilted and covered with debris, is a treacherous surface: DC 12 Balance checks are required to navigate the distance successfully.

2. Cave Entrance: Crates and barrels stand in stacks against this cave's walls. A large trunk contains multiple outfits, useful for a shapeshifting denizen who requires clothing when in disguise. The crates and barrels contain ale, oil, preserved foodstuffs, and bulky objects consigned to this storage area. The inhabitant brings smaller and more valuable items down to the lair (area 7).

3. Parlor: The proprietor of the Sea Caves rarely, if ever, entertains visitors: A dragon's safety depends on the lair's secrecy. However, at times the inhabitant might entertain other dragons (particularly if a Chamber agent) and enjoys showing off this room, filled with beautiful art. A huge, plush carpet covers the floor, ensorcelled to repel water and salt. The carpet is worth 280 gp. Beautiful silver-threaded tapestries hang from the walls, each worth 100 gp, depicting scenes of sea travel and enormous sea-serpents. A crystal decanter and set of six gold-rimmed goblets, worth 450 gp altogether, sits on a small oak table.

4. Secondary Entrance: Tiny bells hang from the nets disguising this entrance. Disturbing the nets causes the bells to ring, alerting anyone in areas 3, 4, or 5. Creatures can attempt to slip silently past the nets with a DC 20 Move Silently check, or disable the bells with a DC 20 Disable Device check.

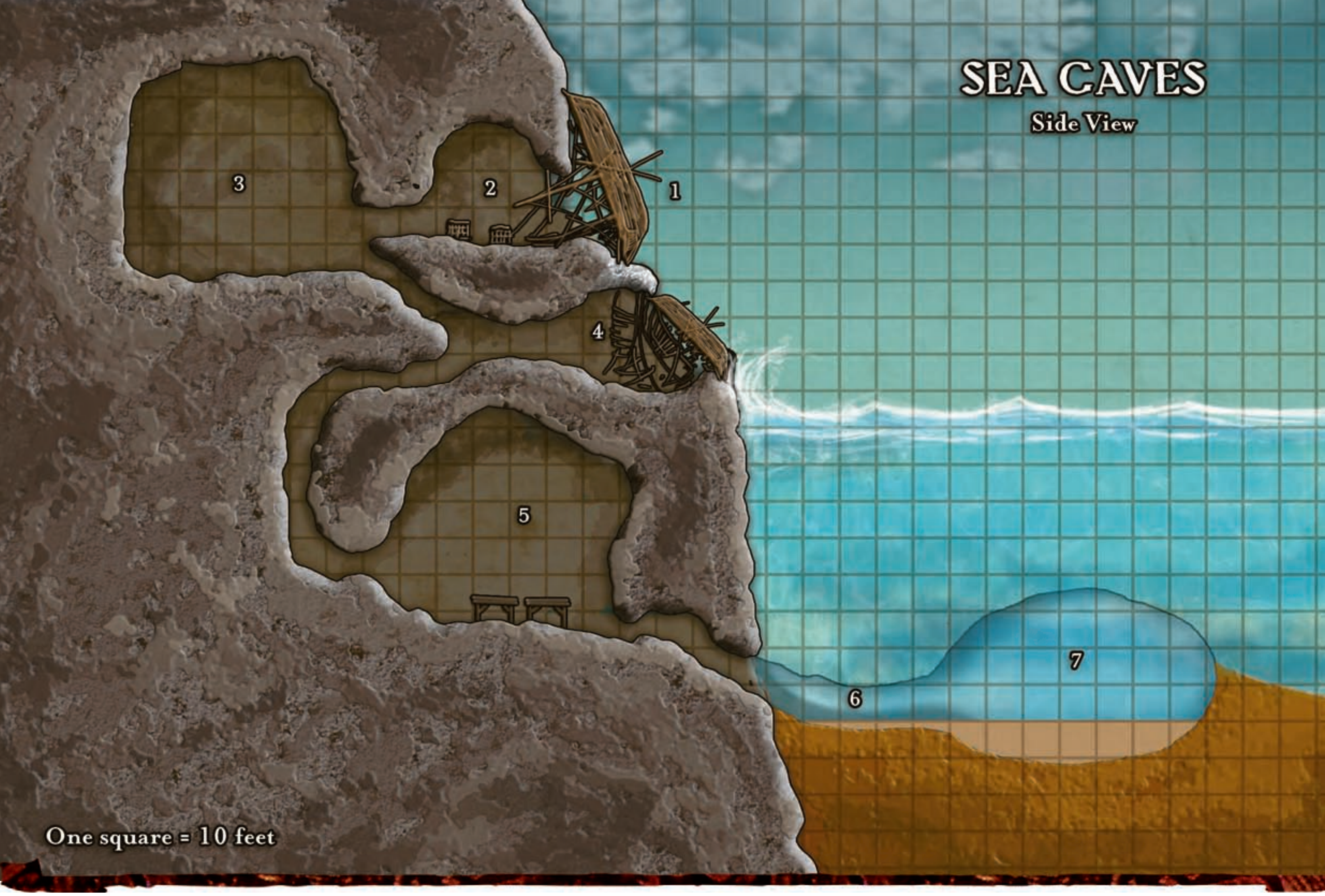
5. Trophy Room: Being so near the water, the caves offer unusual specimens of sea life that, while monetarily valueless, are impressive in their unique coloring and beauty. Preserved fish line the walls here, their scales reflecting rainbow colors whenever light falls on them. The most beautiful specimens have gems instead of eyes. A preserved shark hangs from the ceiling, its mouth open as if ready to devour whoever enters the cavern. Barnacles, abalones, seashells, giant clams, and heaps of colored sand decorate the floor.

Near the entrance, a stuffed eel coils in a remarkably lifelike pose. Its open mouth displays rows of needlelike teeth, and two large black gems wink from its eyesockets. If anyone touches the eel, they receive a nasty jolt from a *shocking grasp* trap.

Shocking Grasp Trap: CR 4; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (*shocking grasp*, 5th-level sorcerer, 5d6 electricity damage); Search DC 26; Disable Device DC 26. Cost: 2,500 gp.

6. Glass Tunnel: Here, the tunnel descends. Once it clears the rock, its walls are manufactured from glass. The tube rests partially in the sand, so that anyone walking down it seems to walk under an archway of water. Phosphorescent algae light up the sea, giving a clear view of fish and other nearby marine creatures.

7. Lair: This large room is almost completely buried under the sand. Only an oval window remains at



the apex of the egg-shaped chamber, providing a sort of skylight that displays the ever-changing sea. Mounds of colored sand cover the floor, both aesthetically pleasing and affording concealment for bags, boxes, and coffers full of treasure. Piles of coins cover the sand and make it even more difficult to extract a larger item from its hiding place.

Twelve preserved starfish lie scattered around the room and strewn throughout the treasure. The starfish are ensorcelled to act like tiny bombs; anyone who touches or otherwise disturbs a starfish triggers it. The starfish explodes, doing 1d4 points of damage to anyone in a 5-foot radius (Reflex DC 11 half). More importantly, an exploding starfish sprays coins in all directions, some of which strike the glass shell that forms this room. If at least four starfish explode, the glass shell cracks and water leaks in, filling areas 6 and 7 in four rounds.

SEA CAVES ENCOUNTERS

(Check 1/hour, 8% chance)

d%	Encounter	EL
01–15	Mature adult black dragon (*MM* 70)	14
16–30	1d4 scrags (aquatic trolls) (*MM* 248)	5–9
31–45	1d4 serγulins (*MM3* 148)	7–11
46–60	2d6 sahuagin (*MM* 217)	4–9
61–75	Ochre jelly (*MM* 202)	5
76–90	1d6 blackspawn raiders (*MM4* 130)	4–9
91–100	1d3 sea hags (*MM* 144)	4–7

SUB-CITY SPRAWL

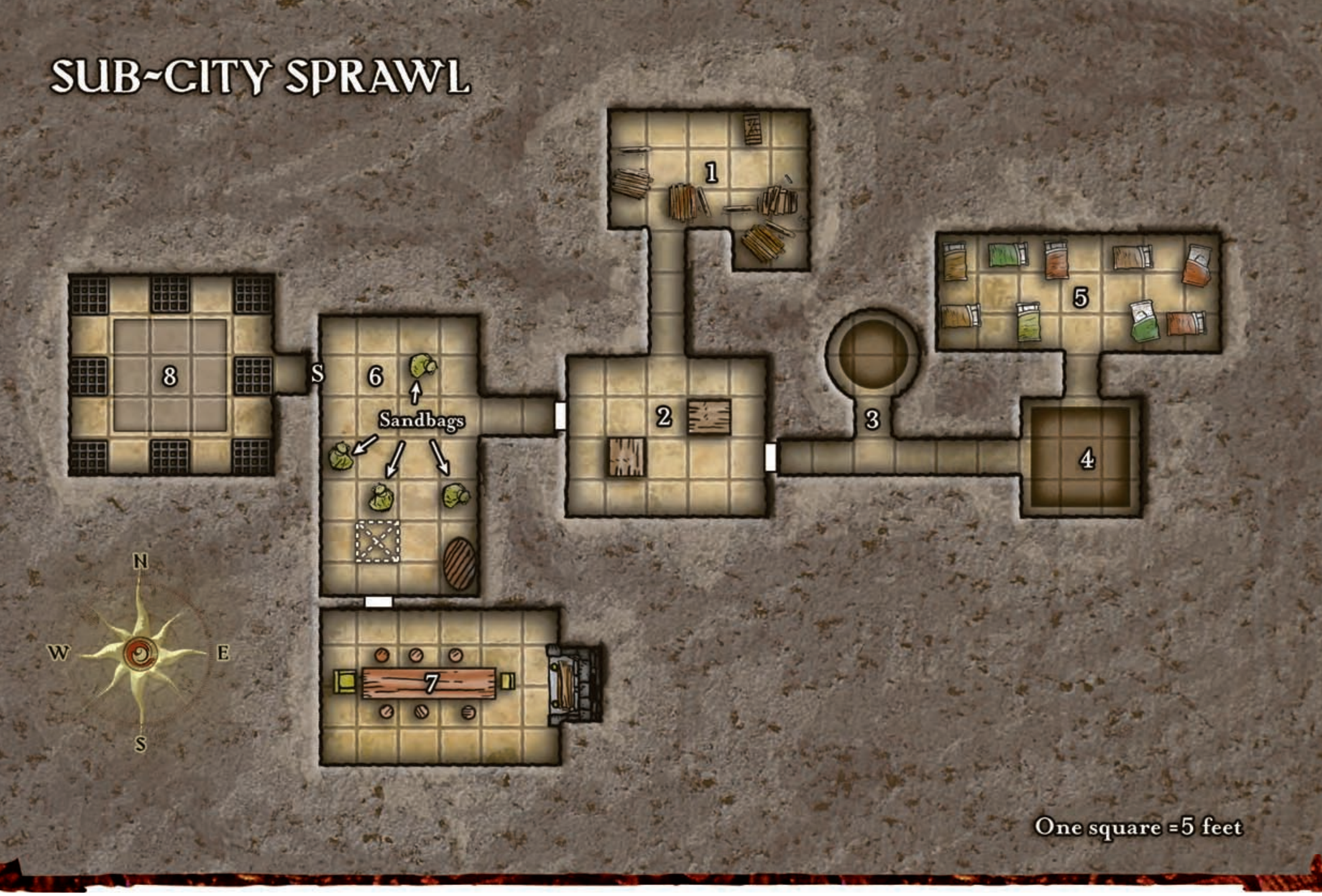
Beneath the city streets, tunnels and sloped shafts connect a half-dozen chambers. The master of this hidden enclave could use the area for a multitude of purposes: a guildhall for thieves or for a secret society; storage space for a hoard, smuggled valuables, or documents; or a lair. Local authorities might be unaware of these tunnels or think them abandoned, or they might know of the tunnels but lack the motivation or strength to investigate.

APPROACH

The Sprawl's entrance sits 10 feet above street level, at the top of an abandoned fire tower. The wooden tower holds a water tank aloft, and once served as a watch post and an extinguishing station. Now a lookout keeps an eye out for anyone who might show undue interest in the area. A wooden ladder grants access to the top of the tower, where a trapdoor covers a shaft that leads down into area 1.

The water tank itself is the lookout's post. It holds several quarts of oil that can be tipped down the ladder if enemies approach. Anyone on the oiled ladder must succeed on a DC 20 Reflex save or slip off and take 1d6 points of falling damage. A successful DC 10 Climb check is required thereafter to ascend. A large metal bucket filled with bottles and scrap metal sits next to the cauldron; if the lookout senses trouble, he drops the bucket down the shaft to area 1 to sound an alarm.

SUB-CITY SPRAWL



FEATURES

Dragons don't require light, and so the master of the area prefers servants and bodyguards who likewise see in the dark. Dwarves, drow, orcs, half-orcs, goblinoids, and half-dragons work best. If the residents possess darkvision, the tunnels remain unlit except for several areas, as noted in the keyed descriptions.

The connecting tunnels slope at a sharp angle, requiring DC 15 Balance checks to negotiate. It's impossible to run or charge in the sloped tunnels. A series of staggered niches in the tunnel floors provide stable footing for those who know where the niches are. Anyone unfamiliar with the location must succeed on a DC 20 Search check to find them. Anyone using the niches can traverse the tunnels at normal speed, but still cannot run or charge.

KEYED LOCATIONS

The following features correspond to numbered areas on the map.

1. Barricades: A rope hangs down the shaft from the top of the fire tower into this area. Climbers can brace against the wall, requiring only a DC 5 Climb check to use the rope. Old timbers and tables stacked in piles serve as barricades, providing cover for anyone who stands behind them. If the lookout sounds the alarm, guards rush to this area with readied crossbows to snipe at intruders.

2. Common Room: This chamber is close to the barricades, so someone within can always hear the alarm. Two square tables sit in recessed pits, deep enough so that the tabletop is level with the floor and the denizens climb down to take their seats. In case of an attack, defenders use the pits and tables as cover. A bookshelf lists against one wall; poor quality tales of "adventure" and a few sets of cards and dice gather dust on its shelves.

3. Offal Pit: A repulsive smell issues from this dank pit. The denizens of the Sprawl use this area to discard refuse and waste. The ample food supply attracts pests of all types, such as roaches and rats. They infest this area but rarely venture into the other rooms of the complex. Larger scavengers, such as an otyugh or gelatinous cube, might live at the bottom of the pit.

4. Kennel: The tunnel opens into this room, three-quarters of the way up the wall. A narrow ledge runs around the edge of the room. Anyone unfamiliar with the room's layout must succeed on a DC 20 Reflex save on first entering or fall off, taking 1d6 points of falling damage. A DC 10 Balance check is necessary to navigate the ledge. The ledge to the left (southeast) is stable, but the northwest ledge collapses at the midpoint. A creature on the ledge when it collapses must make a DC 20 Reflex save to avoid falling off.

The residents of this area often chain a dangerous animal or beast here for protection.

5. Sleeping Quarters: This large room features a number of cots and bedrolls. Some appear to hold sleeping figures, but a successful DC 20 Spot check reveals that cleverly made mannequins lie in the bedrolls. The mannequins' cloth torsos contain a jumble of scrap metal, bells, and fragile glass baubles. Any violent action toward the mannequin (such as an attempted coup de grace) elicits a crashing din that can easily be heard in areas 2 and 3.

6. Meeting/Training Room: An oval table stands next to a stack of wooden chairs. When not used as a meeting room, the area's residents train here.

Four sandbags hang from pulleys in the ceiling; the guards lower them when needed and raise them out of the way when not. The pull-ropes attach to iron rings in the wall. As a standard action that provokes an attack of opportunity, a person can release a pull-rope and drop a sandbag. Anyone standing beneath a released sandbag must succeed on a DC 20 Reflex save or take 1d6 points of bludgeoning damage.

7. Mess Hall: A battered wooden table surrounded by roughly carved chairs stands in the center of this room. Against the south wall, an enormous hearth dominates the room. Its chimney disappears into the ceiling and eventually opens into a sewer tunnel, to hide the telltale smoke from being seen by people on the street.

8. Hidden Lair: A secret door leads to this area (Search DC 25). Traps likely guard it as well, the strongest security measures the master of this area can afford. This room contains eight 3-foot-deep pits, arranged in a square and covered with padlocked iron grates (Open Lock DC 30). Each pit could be individually trapped, and some might contain illusions that cover deadly creatures, such as snakes, instead of treasure.

In the center of the eight treasure pits is a much larger depression. Copper and silver coins cover its floor, and its walls hold windows that display a cross-section of the treasure pits. In this fashion, a dragon master can sleep surrounded by wealth while still keeping the more valuable items secure.

Worn timbers and rusty struts shore up the vaulted ceiling of this chamber. The enclave's master has weakened key timbers so that an exceptionally large and strong creature (such as a dragon) can burst up through the roof and into the street above. Anyone standing in the room when the roof collapses takes 5d6 points of bludgeoning damage (Reflex DC 20 half). No one has used this last-ditch getaway plan—yet.

SUB-CITY SPRAWL ENCOUNTERS

(Check 1/hour, 12% chance)

d%	Encounter	EL
01–10	Otyugh (*MM* 204)	4
11–20	2d4 dolgrims (*ECS* 282)	2–7
21–30	1d2 half-orc infiltrators (*MM4* 117)	2–5
31–40	1d4 howlers (*MM* 154)	3–7
41–50	1d2 changeling spies (*MM3* 24)	3–5
51–60	Ogre (*MM* 199)	3
61–70	1d4 warforged scouts (*MM3* 193)	1–2
71–80	Half-black dragon 4th-level fighter (*MM* 146)	6
81–90	Gelatinous cube (*MM* 201)	3
91–100	Young brass dragon (*MM* 79)	6

KHORVAIRE ENCOUNTERS

HAZE-OF-DEATH

"It came over the hill and straight at us. I can't remember exactly how it looked, only its size, and the gray haze that came with it. We lost Drugor. I hope he died quick. I never saw anything that horrific before, and I don't expect to ever again."

—Ikar the Black, Mournland salvager

Perhaps a few dragons recall Haze-of-Death's true name, but he himself forgot it on the Day of Mourning.

Once a Chamber agent, Haze-of-Death left the organization to throw his lot in with the lesser races of Khorvaire. The great white dragon saw potential in humanity and admired Vvaraak's example. He wanted to teach the lesser races and help them achieve greatness, seeing them as worthy individuals in their own right, not merely pawns in the Prophecy. The Chamber tried to discourage him, but Haze-of-Death ignored their entreaties.

During his work for the Chamber, Haze-of-Death had forged a friendship with a Cyran professor. He traveled to Cyre to offer his services as a negotiator and a teacher, hoping to help end the war and usher in a new era of enlightenment.

Perhaps Haze-of-Death's age and power saved him from the cataclysm on the Day of Mourning. Perhaps it was random chance, or a cruel twist of fate. In any event, the dragon who clawed his way out of the Glowing Chasm after the devastation was very different from the one who'd come to Cyre. The rampant arcane energies crippled Haze-of-Death, then mutated him, and either the severity of his injuries or his terrible change drove him hopelessly mad. He is convinced that enemies lurk on all sides, waiting for a moment of weakness to steal his possessions.

Now Haze-of-Death lurks deep within the Mournland, scouting far and wide for treasures to add to his "hoard" and devouring anyone unlucky enough to cross his path.

DESCRIPTION

Haze-of-Death's body, once snow-white, now reflects the dismal gray that permeates the Mournland. Many of his scales have broken off to leave jagged, raw patches on his hide. Bony growths jut from his joints and his brow, weighing down his already massive head. Rents in his wings have healed unevenly, leaving a patchwork of scar tissue across their span and giving Haze-of-Death a drunken tilt when he flies.

Worse still, the dead-gray mist that encloses the Mournland also surrounds Haze-of-Death. The horrid vapor seeps from bloodless wounds on his flanks and hisses from his nostrils when he breathes.

MINIONS

Haze-of-Death prefers solitude, and he lacks the sanity to command minions with any coherence. However, several months ago, the dragon stumbled on a band of salvagers led by Ikar the Black. Haze-of-Death pounced on the closest target, a human named Drugor, who bore a passing resemblance to Haze-of-Death's Cyran friend. To Drugor's cautious relief, the monstrous dragon didn't eat him outright but instead carried Drugor back to his lair.

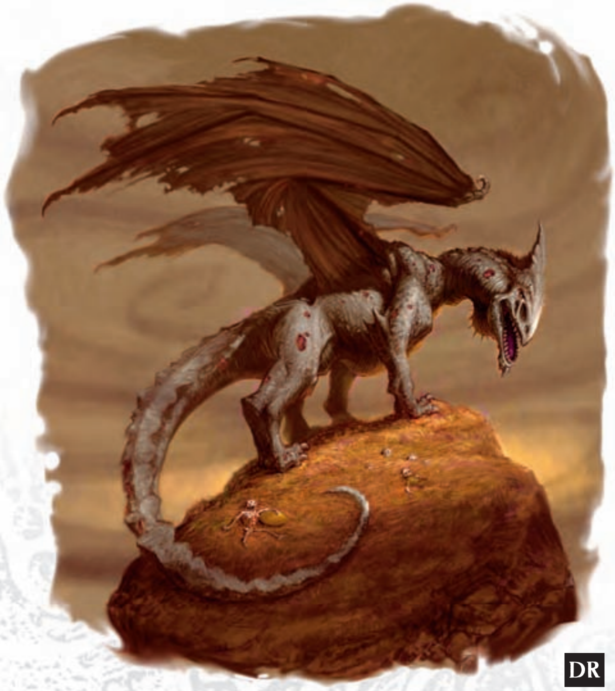
Over the ensuing months, Drugor figured out that Haze-of-Death had mistaken him for someone else. The crafty rogue used his gift of guile to keep the dragon believing they were old friends until he could find a chance to escape. In the meantime, his proximity to the Glowing Chasm began to warp Drugor: After a few weeks, his mind began to fragment, and his body mutated not much later.

Haze-of-Death uses Drugor to investigate areas too small for the mighty dragon to enter, and to "spy" on the enemies that he imagines surround him. Drugor usually obeys the dragon out of fear, addled thoughts of escape and his old life drifting through his mind. Sometimes, though, he is convinced that he actually is a Cyran noble who somehow escaped death and has since partnered up with his old dragon friend.

ALLIES AND ENEMIES

In Haze-of-Death's mind, enemies abound. He sees ghosts everywhere, and sometimes hears the voices of his Chamber associates who tried to convince him not to leave them. When the hallucinations grow too strong to bear, Haze-of-Death takes wing and flies as far and fast as he can, destroying any living thing he encounters.

Organizations that frequently enter the Mournland, such as Ikar's Salvage and the Khraal Lords (*ECS* 189), don't always come into conflict with Haze-of-Death. The dragon sometimes sleeps for weeks, but even when he is active, the sheer size of the Mournland makes encountering him unlikely. The more often such salvagers and pirates cross the dead-gray mist, though, the greater their chance of running into Haze-of-Death. If the dragon causes enough destruction, the survivors might hire brave adventurers to hunt down and slay the ravager.



Haze-of-Death roams the Mournland

Haze-of-Death has no true allies, but he is aware of the Lord of Blades and his minions. The warforged don't smell like prey to Haze-of-Death, and the Lord of Blades sees no reason to venture into the dragon's territory yet. For now, the two maintain an unofficial truce.

HOOKS

Simply entering the Mournland could result in direct conflict with Haze-of-Death. Other possible hooks include the following.

Drugor's Rescue: One of Ikar the Black's band spots the lost Drugor, alive, but the man disappears before the team can approach him. Ikar hires the PCs to track down and return his lost salvager.

Research Material: A wizard in Sharn thinks he can unravel the mystery of the Glowing Chasm and possibly reverse its effect. To complete his research he needs three discarded scales from Haze-of-Death; only they contain the right properties to manufacture the cure.

HAZE-OF-DEATH CR 26

Male old white dragon aristocrat 4/fighter 8

CE Huge dragon

Init +0; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., keen senses; Listen +33, Spot +33

Aura frightful presence (240 ft., DC 31)

Languages Common, Draconic, Risian

AC 34, touch 8, flat-footed 34 (–2 size, +26 natural)

hp 398 (36 HD); **DR** 10/magic

Immune cold, paralysis, sleep

SR 21

Fort +25, **Ref** +20, **Will** +18

Weakness vulnerability to fire

Speed 60 ft. (12 squares), burrow 30 ft., fly 200 ft. (poor), swim 60 ft.; Flyby Attack

Melee bite +39 (3d8+12/19–20) and
2 claws +39 each (2d6+5) and
claw +35 (2d6+5) and
2 wings +38 each (1d8+5) and
wing +35 (1d8+5) and
tail slap +38 (2d6+15)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (15 ft. with bite)

Base Atk +30; **Grp** +48

Atk Options Cleave, Great Cleave, Living Breath, Power Attack, Snatch, magic strike

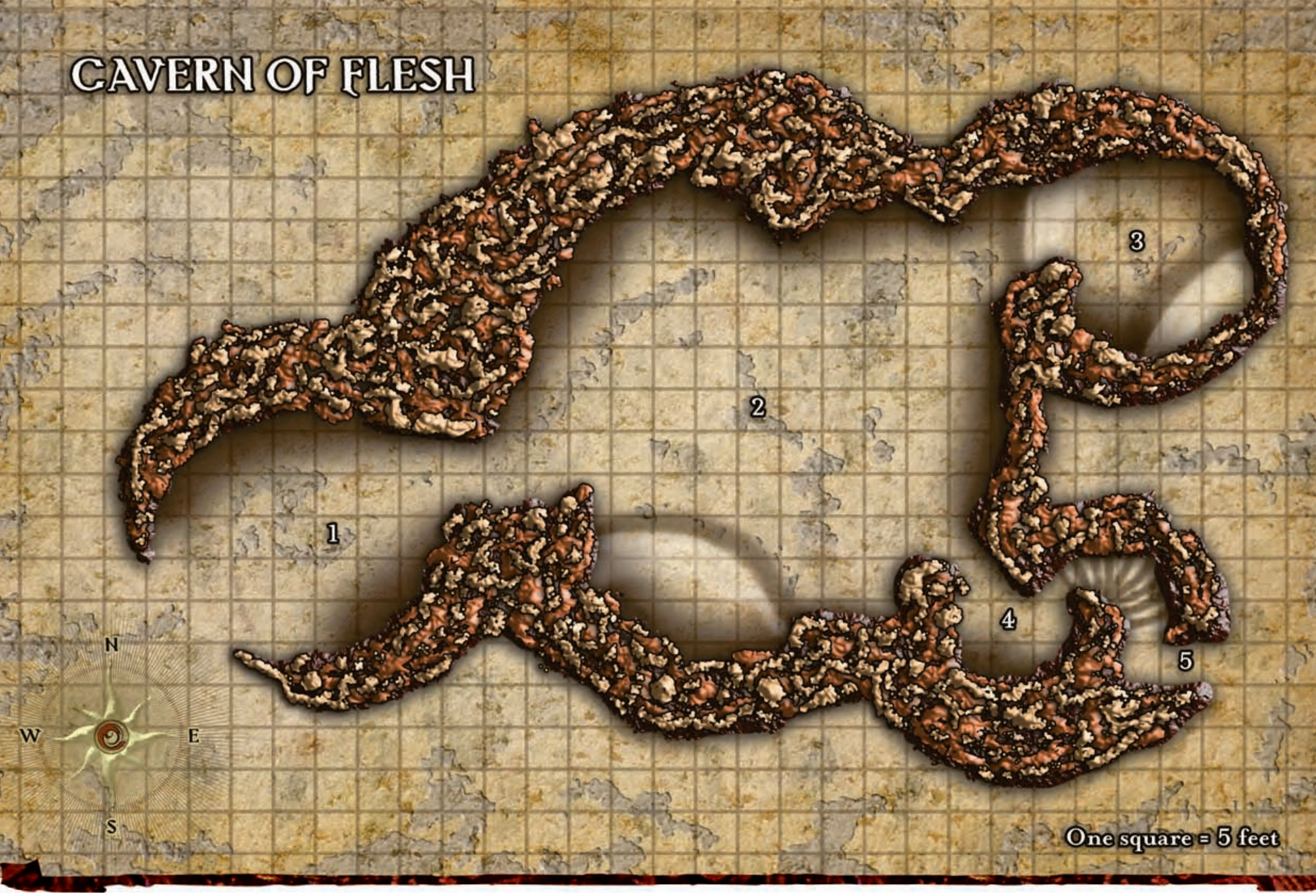
Special Actions breath weapon, crush 2d8+15 (DC 33)

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 5th):
2nd (4/day)—*false life, whispering wind*
1st (7/day)—*alarm, chill touch* (DC 12), *mage armor, ray of enfeeblement* (+33 ranged touch)
0 (6/day)—*detect magic, disrupt undead, flare* (DC 11), *ghost sound, ray of frost* (+33 ranged touch), *touch of fatigue* (+43 ranged touch, DC 11)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th):
3/day—*freezing fog* (DC 16), *fog cloud, gust of wind* (DC 13)
1/day—*living breath*

Abilities Str 31, Dex 10, Con 21, Int 12, Wis 7, Cha 12

SQ cloud of mist, icewalking, water breathing



Feats Ability Focus (frightful presence), Cleave^{B}, Flyby Attack, Great Cleave, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Multiattack, Improved Natural Armor (3), Improved Natural Attack (bite), Multiattack, Power Attack^{B}, Rapidstrike (claws)^{Dr}, Rapidstrike (wings)^{Dr}, Snatch, Weapon Focus (bite)^{B}, Weapon Focus (claw)^{B}, Weapon Specialization (bite)^{B}

Skills Concentration +36, Diplomacy +5, Gather Information +5, Hide –8, Intimidate +40, Jump +30, Knowledge (local) +32, Listen +29, Search +28, Spot +29 , Sense Motive +29, Swim +18

Magic Strike (Ex) Haze-of-Death's natural attacks are treated as magic weapons for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Breath Weapon (Su) 50-ft. cone, once every 1d4 rounds, damage 8d6 cold, Reflex DC 33 half.

Cloud of Mist (Su) The same dead-gray mists that surround the Mournland also seep from Haze-of-Death's body. He always has concealment. Also, any living creature within 5 feet of Haze-of-Death must make a DC 33 Will save or become fatigued. The fatigued condition ends once the creature moves out of the area, but if the creature reenters the mist he must make another saving throw. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Improved Multiattack Haze-of-Death's secondary attacks with natural weapons have no penalty on the attack roll.

Living Breath (Su) Haze-of-Death gained this mutation on the Day of Mourning. Once per day he can use his breath weapon to conjure a living cloud of life-draining cold. This functions as a living cone of cold (*ECS* 293). The living breath weapon persists for an hour, during which time it is under Haze-of-Death's control.

Rapidstrike (Feat) Haze-of-Death can make an extra claw and an extra wing attack each round at a –5 penalty.

CAVERN OF FLESH

On an ordinary battlefield, Haze-of-Death would undoubtedly make his lair in a cavern of bones. The weird properties of the Mournland, though, have instead created a horrific den of dead flesh. Out of the slick earth of the dragon's cavern jut the corpses of soldiers, most clad in armor and some still clutching weapons. Torsos hang from the ceiling or protrude from walls, their limbs dangling to brush against creatures that move past.

Keyed Locations

The following features correspond to numbered areas on the map.

1. Mouth of Banners: The cavern itself is natural, a series of hollow hills possibly inhabited by another rogue dragon before the Day of Mourning. Haze-of-Death decided to decorate the entrance to his lair in a manner befitting his imagined stature. He collected hundreds of tattered standards from the battlefield and hung them like banners around the cave entrance and from the ceiling within. Most have faded to gray and all are mud-stained and tattered, but in the dragon's eyes, they flap brightly in a nonexistent breeze.

The cavern entrance measures 25 feet in height, and extends 30 feet into the hillside. From time to time, mud-slicked banners come loose and flutter down like giant bats, possibly startling trespassers.

Stones, refuse, and old bones have frozen into the chamber's floor. Haze-of-Death drags in mud every time he returns, forming a slick coating over the frozen, bumpy floor that makes for treacherous footing. This area counts as difficult terrain.

Characters can identify any still-visible symbols on the banners as crests of Cyran and other Five Nations' noble houses with a successful DC 20 Knowledge (nobility and royalty) check.

2. Central Chamber: Haze-of-Death sleeps in this enormous chamber, which extends 40 feet upward, almost to the top of the hill, and 60 feet across. He has built up a giant "nest" of ice along one side of the chamber with repeated applications of his breath weapon.

When Haze-of-Death goes hunting, he sometimes leaves a living breath weapon behind to guard his lair, especially if Drugor stays as well. As a result, a thin film of ice covers the floor. A few masticated bones and other rubble lie frozen in the ground.

Living Breath Weapon CR 24

N Huge ooze (cold)
Init +1; **Senses** blind, blindsight 60 ft.; Listen +0, Spot +0

AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 15
(–2 size, +1 Dex, +6 deflection)
hp 204 (24 HD); **DR** 10/magic
Immune ooze immunities (*MM* 313)
SR 34
Fort +17, **Ref** +15, **Will** +15

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares)
Melee slam +19 (1d8+4 plus spell effect)
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +18; **Grp** +29
Atk Options magic strike
Special Actions engulf (DC 19)
Abilities Str 16, Dex 13, Con 16, Int —, Wis 13, Cha 16
SQ ooze traits (*MM* 313)

Magic Strike (Ex) A living breath weapon's natural attacks are treated as magic weapons for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Engulf (Ex) A living breath weapon can flow around creatures that fit within its space as a standard action. It cannot make a slam attack during a round in which it engulfs. The living breath weapon merely has to move over the opponents, affecting as many as it can cover. Opponents can make attacks of opportunity against the living breath weapon, but if they do so they are not entitled to a saving throw. Those who do not attempt attacks of opportunity must succeed on a DC 19 Reflex save or be engulfed; on a success they are pushed back or aside (opponent's choice) as the living breath weapon moves forward. Engulfed creatures are subject to the full normal effect of the breath weapon each round on the living breath weapon's turn, and are considered to be grappled and trapped within its body.

Spell Effect (Su) A creature hit by a living breath weapon's slam attack takes 8d6 points of cold damage. A DC 27 Reflex save halves this damage.

3. Hoard of Mourning: Haze-of-Death keeps his pitiful hoard in this side chamber. In his madness, the dragon believes priceless riches abound within; in truth, the "hoard" is little more than a junkheap. Dented helmets, rusted shields, broken weapons, smashed warforged components, and other trash lie in a massive pile—tribute to Haze-of-Death's obsession and broken mind. A few items of value might be hidden in the trash, but if so, they reside there by chance.

Haze-of-Death values his hoard of junk as much as any other dragon's heaps of gold and silver. Were a creature to remove even the smallest tarnished buckle from the pile, Haze-of-Death would fly into a rage and neither eat nor sleep until he had tracked down the thief and reclaimed his property.

4. Sleeping Chamber: This tiny chamber, little more than a niche in the wall, serves as Drugor's sleeping area. Drugor suffers from horrible nightmares, though, and prefers to sleep as little as possible. He spends his waking hours serving Haze-of-Death or wandering aimlessly through the lair.

Drugor poses no real threat to any heroes strong enough to challenge Haze-of-Death, but he could serve as a source of information about the dragon. Talking with the man is difficult, especially while he is under the impression that he is a surviving Cyran noble. A con artist and petty thief in his old life, Drugor possesses just enough talent and force of personality to make his delusions believable.

Drugor CR 4

Male human rogue 4
NE Medium humanoid
Init +7; **Senses** Listen +6, Spot +6
Languages Common, Orc

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 17; uncanny dodge
(+3 Dex, +3 armor, +1 natural)
hp 20 (4 HD)
Resist cold 10, evasion
Fort +2, **Ref** +7, **Will** +0

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee mwk short sword +7 (1d6+2/18–20)
Atk Options Combat Reflexes, sneak attack +2d6
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +5

Abilities Str 14, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 15
SQ mutations, trapfinding, trap sense +1
Feats Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse
Skills Balance +5, Bluff +9, Diplomacy +11, Disguise +2 (+4 acting), Gather Information +4, Hide +10, Intimidate +4, Knowledge (local) +8, Jump +4, Listen +6, Move Silently +10, Open Lock +12, Sense Motive +6, Spot +6, Tumble +10
Possessions masterwork studded leather armor, masterwork short sword, masterwork thieves' tools

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Mutations (Su) His proximity to the Glowing Chasm slowly mutated Drugor. In addition to a subtly misshapen appearance, Drugor gained resistance to cold 10 and a +1 natural armor bonus from his newly thickened skin.

5. Back Door: This winding tunnel leads out of the lair by a hidden opening. Haze-of-Death has ordered Drugor to always use the rear entrance, but the poor man hates the sight of the dangling corpses. He requires great convincing (or a direct order from Haze-of-Death) to use this passage, but also refuses to disobey his master by using the main entrance.

VYSSILTHAR THE SHADOW-SEER

"Certainly, at first examination, your interpretation appears correct. When you take into account the assassination attempt on the king eighteen years ago and the fact that the innkeeper's daughter spilled a pail of milk this morning, though . . . surely you see the implications?"

—Vyssilthar the Shadow-Seer

Dragons note the passage of decades as the lesser races do days, but the last few thousand years have passed even more swiftly for the black dragon Vyssilthar the Shadow-Seer.

Three thousand years ago, she looked over her shoulder for a last glimpse of her mate, Qataakhast. Then Sarlona passed from sight, and Vyssilthar turned her attention to the new continent across the Sea of Rage.

Vyssilthar had known for some time that her destiny waited in Khorvaire. Interpreting the Prophecy is an art, and Vyssilthar is an artist. She gained the title "Shadow-Seer" from her uncanny ability to reveal the hidden nuances of the Prophecy and see accurately into the shadows of the future.

When it came time for the expedition to leave, Vyssilthar asked Qataakhast to accompany her across the sea. Qataakhast had to refuse, for he was serving a penance that required him to remain in exile on Sarlona (see page 120). Although she knew what Qataakhast's answer would be, Vyssilthar felt compelled to ask—possibly the only time she tried to deny the power of the Prophecy.

Over the weeks of sea travel in half-elf guise, Vyssilthar forged an unexpected friendship with Lhazaar, the captain of the expedition. She found the human to be both intelligent and clever, as brave as practical. Vyssilthar read the Prophecy in the stars and the movement of the waves and decided to stay with Lhazaar—the future showed much chaos and pain if the pirate queen followed one path over another.

After Lhazaar's death, Vyssilthar discerned from her studies that she was required to be active and relatively young at a period roughly three thousand years in the future. She cultivated an isolated clan of Lhazaar's descendants and granted them a birthright. The oldest member of this clan cast *flesh to stone* on the dragon and secured the "half-elf" statue in a specially prepared chamber along with a carefully wrapped *stone to flesh* scroll. According to tradition, passed down from clan elder to clan elder, the scroll was to be read only when the stars were right, "during an age when Khorvaire is bathed in blood." Crafting such a plan required a monumental leap of faith on Vyssilthar's part, but she was certain that Prophecy would provide. And so it did.

Awakened roughly 50 years ago, Vyssilthar has remained in the area now called the Lhazaar Principalities. She soon discovered and informed a local Chamber agent of her existence and talents. Now the black dragon acts as a consultant for Chamber agents from time to time, but she is a solitary creature and is more concerned with her own destiny than the future of all reality.

Vyssilthar's main interest is interpreting the fragments of Prophecy with which she comes into direct contact. She is convinced the Prophecy guides her actions and puts her where she needs to be. She still mourns Lhazaar's death and misses Qataakhast—their loss is still recent for her. Sometimes Vyssilthar thinks of returning to her mate, until she remembers that he might no longer be alive; even if he is, he is now far older than she and likely has no use for her. Vyssilthar has accepted that, for now, her place is in Khorvaire, but she holds out hope that she might yet speak with Qataakhast one day.

DESCRIPTION

In dragon form, Vyssilthar is a magnificent sable in color. Qataakhast often likened Vyssilthar's hide to a sunset; violet crest, indigo body, and pitch-black claws, tail, and wings. Silver horns curve down over Vyssilthar's face. Milky white eyes make the dragon appear blind, but she sees as well as any dragon.

When in disguise, Vyssilthar favors the form of a female half-elf with black, gray, or silver hair. In either form, she always wears a bronze ring that Qataakhast gave her the ring shortly after they first met. Vyssilthar had the trinket ensorcelled, and now it automatically resizes with her as she changes shape.

MINIONS

Except for her personal servants, who might be the last remaining descendants of Lhazaar, Vyssilthar's minions don't realize they work for a dragon. She maintains various guises and uses them to recruit aid when necessary. The first mate of a ship in Prince Ryger's Seadragons sells naval charts and reports of sea activity to a cartographer in Regalport. A House Thuranni spy sometimes trades information with a scribe who works for noble houses, a mutually satisfactory transaction. A House Lyrandar shipwright discusses the affairs of the day and the finer points of airship design with an amateur carpenter over a mug of ale in Port Verge once a week. The cartographer, scribe, and carpenter are all Vyssilthar in disguise.

ALLIES AND ENEMIES

Vyssilthar has centuries of experience and a great natural talent, but she is not perfect. Her House Thuranni contact grows more suspicious at every meeting with his scribe contact: The information always sounds valuable but turns out to be less important than it first appeared, while that the scribe asks for in return always seems innocuous but later turns out to be of great import. Vyssilthar doesn't know yet, but she is the subject of a House Thuranni investigation to uncover her secrets.

Of all those secrets, the greatest is the youngest of Vyssilthar's Lhazaarite clan. Roe Farwynd bears a physical resemblance to Lhazaar, and her mannerisms evoke strong memories of Vyssilthar's old companion. The dragon treats Roe as an ally, rather than a minion, and supports Roe's goals as her own.

Roe wants nothing more than to return the Lhazaar Principalities to a position of greatness and influence in the world. Like Prince Ryger, she hopes to unite the kingdom, but she doesn't believe Ryger is the best person to do so. She wants to forge a kingdom that will stand the test of time and contribute to the greater good.

Roe has gathered a small band of allies who believe in her cause, and she wants Vyssilthar to take the lead in uniting the Principalities. At first Vyssilthar resisted, but after interpreting countless threads of the Prophecy, she is beginning to believe uniting the Principalities could be the reason that she went to such extraordinary lengths to extend her existence.

VYSSILTHAR CR 22

Female ancient black dragon spymaster[CAd] 7
NG Huge dragon
Init +4; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., keen senses; Listen +40, Spot +46
Aura frightful presence (300 ft., DC 33)
Languages Common, Draconic, Aquan, Elven, Giant, Orc

AC 41, touch 11, flat-footed 41 (–2 size, +30 natural, +3 deflection)
hp 454 (38 HD); **DR** 15/magic
Immune acid, paralysis, sleep
SR 25
Fort +26, **Ref** +22, **Will** +23; scrying defense

Speed 60 ft. (12 squares), fly 150 ft. (poor), swim 60 ft.; Flyby Attack, Hover, Wingover
Melee bite +44 (2d8+11) and
2 claws +39 each (2d6+5) and
2 wings +39 each (1d8+5) and
tail slap +39 (2d6+16)
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (15 ft. with bite)
Base Atk +35; **Grp** +54
Atk Options Combat Expertise, Power Attack, Silent Spell, magic strike, sneak attack +2d6
Special Actions breath weapon, crush 2d8+16 (DC 34)
Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 11th):
5th (5/day)—*break enchantment, Leomund's secret chest*
4th (7/day)—*detect scrying, dispelling breath*[Dr], *scrying*
3rd (7/day)—*arcane sight, clairaudience/clairvoyance, secret page, tongues*
2nd (7/day)—*arcane lock, detect thoughts* (DC 17), *locate object, misdirection* (DC 17), *obscure object*
1st (8/day)—*alarm, animate rope, disguise self, hold portal, identify*
0 (6/day)—*arcane mark, dancing lights, detect magic, ghost sound* (DC 15), *mending, message, prestidigitation, read magic, resistance*
Note: If you don't have *Draconomicon*, then give Vyssilthar *dimension door* at 4th level.
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 11th):
1/day—*plant growth, corrupt water*
3/day—*charm reptiles* (DC 16), *darkness*, *insect plague*
At will—*Nystul's magic aura* (CL 7th)

Abilities Str 33, Dex 10, Con 23, Int 21, Wis 17, Cha 20
SQ cover identity, deep cover, detect scrying, quick change, scrying defense, slippery mind, undetectable alignment, water breathing
Feats Alertness, Alternate Form*, Appraise Magic Value[CAd], Combat Expertise, Flyby Attack, Hover, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Negotiator, Silent Spell, Skill Focus (Bluff), Skill Focus (Sense Motive), Wingover
Skills Appraise +20, Bluff +23, Decipher Script +15, Diplomacy +43, Disguise +13 (+15 acting), Forgery +10, Gather Information +22, Hide +32, Jump +23, Knowledge (arcana) +39, Knowledge (local) +39, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +15, Listen +40, Move Silently +32, Search +39, Sense Motive +48, Spellcraft +41, Spot +46, Swim +19
Possessions bronze *ring of protection +3*

Appraise Magic Value If Vyssilthar knows an item is magical, she can use the Appraise skill (DC 10 + CL of item) to identify the item's properties. This requires 8 hours of uninterrupted work and consumes 25 gp worth or special materials.
Magic Strike (Ex) Vyssilthar's natural attacks are treated as magic weapons for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.
Breath Weapon (Su) 100-ft. line, once every 1d4 rounds, damage 20d4 acid, Reflex DC 34 half.
Cover Identity (Ex) Vyssilthar maintains three specific cover identities: Elinore, a cartographer in Regalport; Zela, a scribe who works for noble houses in Regalport; and Gale, an amateur carpenter and fisher living in Port Verge. When acting the part of these identities, she gains a +4 circumstance bonus on Disguise checks and a +2 circumstance bonus on Bluff and Gather Information checks.
Deep Cover (Ex) When in one of her cover identities, divination spells detect only information appropriate to her cover identity; they reveal nothing relating to Vyssilthar's real persona.
Dispel Scrying (Su) Vyssilthar can dispel a scrying sensor as if casting a targeted *dispel magic* (CL 17th). She can use this ability 8 times per day.
Quick Change (Ex) Vyssilthar can don a disguise in 1d3 minutes and don or remove armor in one-half the normal time.
Scrying Defense (Ex) Vyssilthar has a +7 bonus on Will saves against divination (scrying) spells, and on Spot checks made to notice the sensors created by such spells.
Slippery Mind (Ex) If Vyssilthar is affected by an enchantment effect and fails her saving throw, she can attempt it again 1 round later at the same DC. She gets only this one extra chance to succeed on her saving throw.
Undetectable Alignment (Ex) As the *undetectable alignment* spell; always active.

228 BLEAK STREET

A cozy one-story house halfway down Bleak Street blends in with the neighborhood. The house displays neither outward opulence nor shabbiness; it seems the home of well-off but not rich middle-class citizens. The other residents of Bleak Street mind their own business, and do not wonder why the owner of 228 rarely shows herself and never draws the curtains back.

Keyed Locations

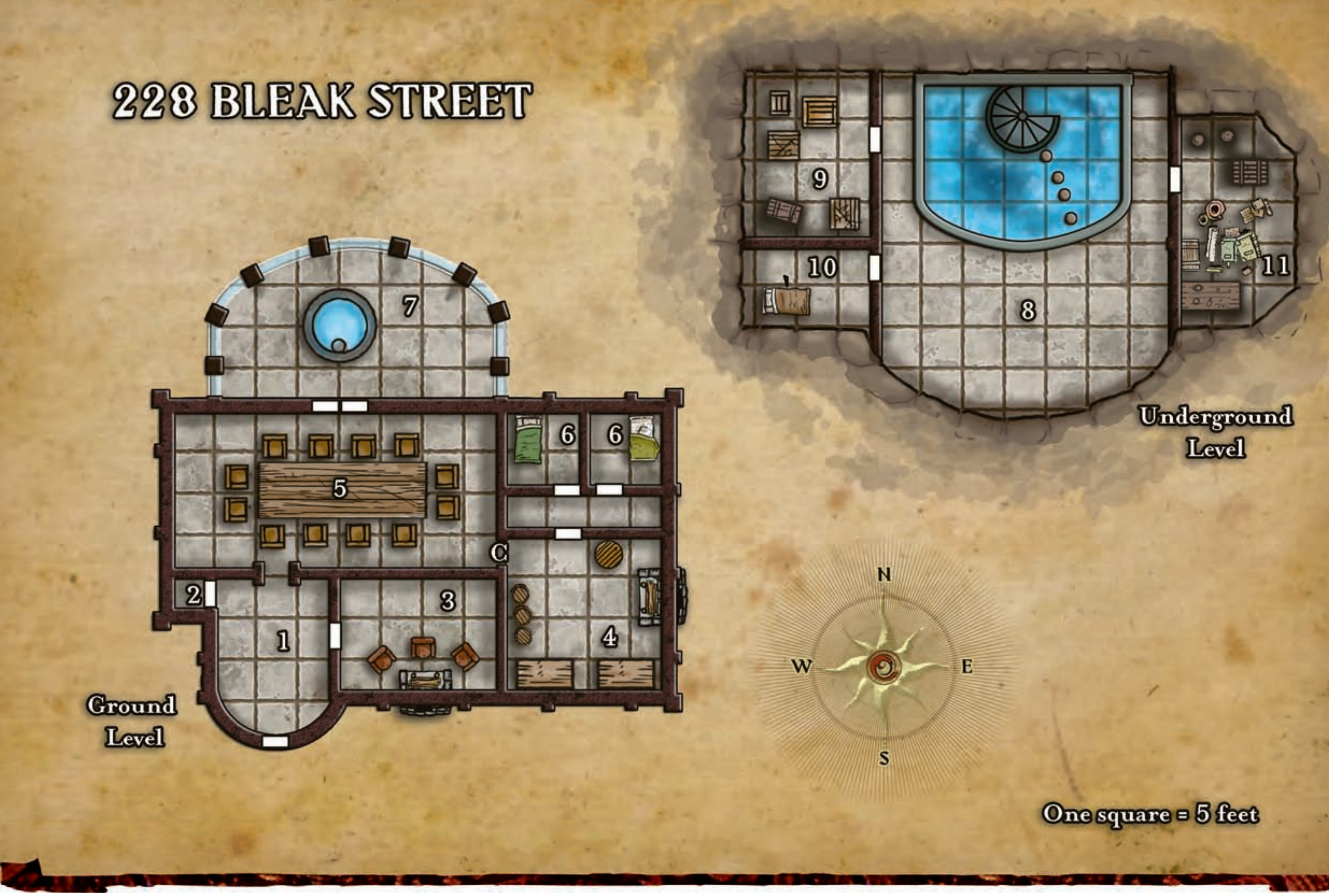
The following features correspond to numbered areas on the map.

1. Foyer: This spacious room displays fine portraits on the walls and sculpted busts atop marble plinths. An open archway leads to the north.

One of the busts is a unique magic item Vyssilthar commissioned centuries ago. An identical bust sits in area 8; by placing her claw or hand on one bust, Vyssilthar can see through the eyes of the other as if with a *clairvoyance* spell.

2. Cloakroom: This is an ordinary cloak room.

3. Lounge: Bookshelves line the walls of this room, and a tiger-fur rug covers the floor. The books cover a range of subjects from astrology to marine biology to seamanship. Three comfortable chairs stand around a



small fireplace, and a set of goblets and a wine decanter rest on a nearby table.

4. Kitchen: Two large wardrobes fitted with shelves serve as a pantry in this well-maintained kitchen. A hidden door leads to the dining hall so that servants can tend to guests unobtrusively—not that Vyssilthar keeps many servants. Until recently, she didn't use the kitchen at all, but now she keeps the pantry stocked for Roe's use.

5. Dining Hall: Floor-to-ceiling windows covered with silver latticework line the west wall of this magnificent chamber. Vyssilthar always keeps the full-length velvet curtains drawn. A cherrywood table and twelve chairs sit in the center of the room, but only two chairs show signs of use (Vyssilthar has taken to sitting with Roe at dinner). Glass doors lead north to the solarium (area 7).

Lately Roe has been asking to use the dining hall as a meeting place for her organization, but Vyssilthar is reluctant to let anyone else know where she lives.

6. Servant's Quarters/Guest Room: These small bedchambers contain well-made furniture and thick carpets, plus several interesting but valueless paintings. One room houses Roe's parents (human expert 6), who serve as Vyssilthar's butler and cook. The other is reserved for the few guests who visit the dragon or her ally.

7. Solarium: A curved glass wall encloses this room, covered with frosted patterns that afford guests within some privacy. Vyssilthar had the walls magically strengthened, granting the glass hardness 6. Bright tropical plants stand in boxes around the edge of the solarium, tended to by Vyssilthar's *plant growth*. If the dragon is under attack, she uses the overgrowth aspect of *plant growth* to fill the solarium with a tropical jungle while she retreats to her private sanctum (area 8).

An ornate fountain stands in the center of the room. Red, yellow, and orange tiles cover the sculpture in a bright mosaic. One tile is actually a button that, when pressed, causes the center of the fountain to descend and form a spiral staircase. Water splashes down the center of the stairs like a miniature waterfall but leaves the outer edge dry and safe for travel. Discovering the hidden button requires a DC 25 Search check; activating the fountain stairs otherwise requires a DC 25 Disable Device check.

8. Private Sanctum: The fountain staircase opens into a deep pool of water. Stepping stones provide access to the rest of the room, though Vyssilthar enjoys sinking into the pool and usually sleeps there. Truly valuable artwork lines the walls in this room, including silver-threaded tapestries depicting the constellations.

Vyssilthar has warded this chamber with *inscriptions of privacy* (*Dr* 85). Any attempt to scan the area causes it to glow softly; anyone scried upon in the area can attempt an opposed caster level check to receive an immediate mental image of the scrier, along with a sense of his direction and distance.

9. Treasure Chamber: The door to this chamber is crafted from three inches of wood-layered adamantine (hardness 20, 60 hp). A superior lock (Open Lock DC 40) holds the door shut. A *slay living* trap also wards the door.

Slay Living Trap: CR 6; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (*slay living*, 9th-level sorcerer, Will DC 17 to avoid death but take 3d6+9 points of damage); Search DC 30; Disable Device DC 30. Cost: 22,500 gp, 1,800 XP.

Priceless treasures fill the room beyond. Chests overflow with silver, gold, and platinum. Coffers of gems sit between stacks of paintings and even a few dragonshards. On a bronzewood table Vyssilthar displays the most precious and beautiful items—presents she hopes to give to Qataakhast one day.

10. Roe's Chamber: Vyssilthar converted this study to a bedchamber for Roe's use. Roe sleeps in the cozy room, decorated with rare works of art, almost every night. During the day she's either out on business, rambling around upstairs, or lounging with Vyssilthar in the private sanctum (area 8).

Roe's parents have told her that she's Lhazaar's descendant. She often dreams of sea voyages and strange coastlines she's never seen before.

ROE FARWYND CR 9

Female human swashbuckler$^{\text{CW}}$ 5/rogue 4
CG Medium humanoid
Init +4; **Senses** Listen +1, Spot +1
Languages Common, Dwarven, Gnome

AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 15; uncanny dodge (+4 Dex, +5 armor)
hp 46 (9 HD)
Resist evasion
Fort +5, **Ref** +10, **Will** +3

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee *+1 keen rapier* +14 (1d6+4/15–20)
Ranged mwk shortbow +13 (1d6/×3)
Base Atk +8; **Grp** +9
Atk Options Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Deft Opportunist, Precise Swing, sneak attack +2d6
Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds*

Abilities Str 12, Dex 19, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 15
SQ dodge bonus +1, grace +1, insightful strike, trap sense +1, trapfinding
Feats Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Deft Opportunist$^{\text{CAd}}$, Precise Swing$^{\text{ECS}}$, Weapon Finesse$^{\text{B}}$, Weapon Focus (rapier)
Skills Balance +6, Bluff +14 , Climb +10, Diplomacy +8, Disguise +2 (+4 acting), Gather Information +4, Hide +15, Intimidate +6, Jump +3, Knowledge (local) +11, Listen +1, Move Silently +15, Sense Motive +13, Sleight of Hand +17, Spot +1, Swim +10 , Tumble +16
Possessions combat gear plus *+2 studded leather armor, +1 keen rapier,* masterwork short bow, *gloves of dexterity +2*

Deft Opportunist Roe gets +4 on attack rolls when making attacks of opportunity.
Dodge Bonus (Ex) During her action, Roe can designate an opponent and receive a +1 dodge bonus to AC against melee attacks from that opponent.
Grace (Ex) Roe gains a +1 competence bonus on Reflex saves (already factored into stats).
Insightful Strike (Ex) Roe applies her Intelligence modifier to her rapier's damage (already factored into statistics). Targets immune to extra damage from sneak attacks or critical hits are immune to Roe's insightful strike.

11. Research Room: Blue glass lanterns fill this room with a soft light that Vyssilthar finds easier on her eyes. She keeps notes and studies Prophecy fragments in this chamber. Parchments, open books with quills stuck in to mark pages, and sketches of dragonmarks lie in piles atop the tables here.

ADVENTURES IN KHORVAIRE

The following dragon-themed adventures could take place in a number of different locations on the continent.

GRISLY PORTENTS

Low-Level

Clyve Edda, a human diviner, stumbled on information regarding the Chamber's existence and its work with the Prophecy. His struggle to master even the smallest fragment of the Prophecy drove him mad. Now Clyve thinks himself a powerful Chamber agent and stalks the city streets, slaughtering dragonmarked victims and attempting to read the Prophecy in their entrails.

HOOKS

If the PCs have a reputation for offering assistance in times of need, the city watch might call on them. A friend or relative of one party member might be a victim of Clyve, or a target who escaped. The family or house of one of the victims could hire the PCs to solve the murder.

SITES

The Library of Hidden Knowledge (page 88) features in this adventure. Clyve could also have fallen in with a group of thugs who recognize and manipulate his derangement. In this case, the thugs and Clyve could reside in the Sub-City Sprawl (page 93).

ADVENTURE

Over the last month, Clyve Edda has killed and eviscerated three people: Airek d'Sivis, a young gnome scribe; Merra d'Ghallanda, a middle-aged halfling who worked as a cook at the Bronze Bison Inn; and Feredeth d'Cannith, a tinker passing through the city.

The PCs could investigate in a number of ways.

1. Detective Work: The names of the dead are public knowledge; the PCs can interview relatives and observe the victims' homes and places of work. A successful DC 10 Gather Information check (or the assistance of a cooperative city watch) reveals the location of each attack.

Anyone with the Investigate feat can make a DC 10 Search check at the crime scenes, the Bronze Bison, and the Library. Clyve left blood smears at each crime scene, and each successful check allows the PCs to close in on the area of town in which the Library sits. At the Bronze Bison, Clyve left distinctive vermilion ink smears on one table, where he sat and studied Merra. A successful DC 15 Diplomacy check (possibly with a generous tip) encourages an employee to recall a twitchy, middle-aged human with red stains on his fingers who sat in the taproom all night a few days before Merra's murder. Another successful check reminds one of Airek's coworkers that Airek often did after-hours scribing work for the Librarian at the Library of Hidden Knowledge.

While the PCs conduct their investigations, they draw the attention of Tiolth (see below).

2. Baiting the Trap: The party might think to lay a trap for the murderer by allowing a dragonmarked PC or ally to wander at night, seemingly alone. This also attracts Tiolth's attention. If the PCs pursue this plan for three nights, they draw Clyve out of hiding. Once Clyve triggers the trap, he attempts to flee using a *potion of invisibility* or a *potion of gaseous form*.

3. Unexpected Interference: The unusual nature of these murders and their ties to the Prophecy have drawn the attention of the real Chamber. Tiolth (NE changeling bard 4, *ECS* 236; change race to changeling) is a professional snoop and blackmailer. Tiolth wants to discover the murderer's identity so he can sell the information, unaware that one of his clients is a Chamber dragon. He follows the PCs and ambushes them once he thinks they've solved the case, preferably attacking when they're distracted by another combat. If the PCs notice Tiolth before he strikes, he attempts to flee, returning to track them later.

4. Showdown: Clyve might be hiding in the Library, or the PCs could interrogate the Librarian (a long and tedious process). The Librarian eventually mentions that he paid Airek to copy notes for him a few days before Airek's murder, and remembers Clyve as an unusual patron who uses vermilion ink. He can also point the party to Clyve's residence. There the PCs can find the murderer, or clues leading to his hideout. Clyve might have allies, such as a group of thugs (rogues 1 or 2, *DMG* 123) led by a tough such as the low-level Demise or Halas Martain (*ECS* 252–253). Clyve is a 5th-level human wizard (*DMG* 125; remove his drow abilities and make him a divination specialist).

REWARDS

The party earns the gratitude of the victims' families, and perhaps a favor from their houses.

DEVELOPMENT

The encounter with Tiolth might lead the party into the world of information brokering, eventually putting them in contact with Tiolth's Chamber client.

DANGEROUS GOODS

Mid-Level

A crew of burly workers load battered crates of construction materials into the cargo hold of a lightning rail car. At least, those are the contents listed on the shipping manifest. In truth, the crates contain byeshk mined in Droaam. The miners dug so deep they unearthed a chamber of Khyber, and within found an unusually large and valuable vein of the rare metal. The precious cargo was transported by caravan to Wroat, and now it makes its final journey to Sharn.

HOOKS

Lightning rail authorities could hire the PCs to guard the cargo, or the party could simply be on the scene as passengers. The PCs could also try to steal the cargo themselves, unaware that a second attack is planned by a rival group.

SITES

The dragon masterminding this attack could have a lair in the Frostbreath Caverns (page 86), the Sea Caves (page 92), or in Sharn in the Sub-City Sprawl (page 93).

ADVENTURE

Mneromas (NE young adult bronze dragon) learned of the shipment through one of his minions, a lightning rail employee. Mneromas immediately sent his most powerful enforcers, a team of bugbear toughs led by Rorog Obradi (CE bugbear rogue 10; *DMG* 123; change race to bugbear and allot more ranks to Use Magic Device) to steal the cargo. Obradi learned to fight at an early age, but his intelligence and inspirational speeches made him a natural leader, and his bandits fearlessly follow him.

1. The Heist: Mneromas provides the bandits with *potions of fly*, *potions of invisibility*, and other useful magic items, including a *portable hole* and *wand of fireballs* for Obradi.

Obradi leads six to eight bugbear bandits; use a mix of 5th-level rogues (*DMG* 123) and 5th-level barbarians (*DMG* 112). When the lightning rail car is in view, Obradi flies close enough to use a scroll of *shatter* on the hatch atop the car. The bandits swoop down, shove the crates into the *portable hole*, and drink *potions of invisibility* before flying back to Mneromas's lair.

The PCs interfere in the heist (see *Explorer's Handbook* for a sample lightning rail map and details on lightning rail combat), and might even save the shipment. Clever characters should realize that the thieves are well organized, well supplied, and not working alone. The bandits refuse to say how they knew the cargo was aboard but hint that they work for a powerful figure who will "get" the PCs one day. A dying raider might even gasp out a promise of vengeance against the party.

If the PCs continue on and deliver the shipment, House Orien hires them to track down whoever orchestrated the attack on the lightning rail.

2. The Trail: A character with the Track feat can make a DC 20 Survival check (+1 for every day after the attack) to find the spot where the bugbears drank their *potions of fly*. From there, a DC 18 Survival check (+1 for every day after the attack) is required to track them back to Mneromas's lair.

Mneromas has additional minions. A greater shadow (*MM* 221) flits through rocks and beneath the ground around the lair, bound to the dragon by some dark ritual and now used as an early warning system. When the shadow spots the PCs, it attempts to sneak back and warn Mneromas. If the PCs notice the shadow and attack it, the chaotic and dim undead retaliates rather than fleeing.

3. The Lair: Mneromas's lair contains additional threats, such as his son and lieutenant, Mnerol (NE male half-bronze dragon 8th-level fighter, *MM* 146; change dragon side to bronze and add 4 fighter levels). Four bugbear bandits remained at the lair when Obradi left to attack the train, and Mnerol marshals this small force against any intruders.

Mnerol's band retreats when wounded and regroups farther inside the lair. Only when badly injured and desperate does Mnerol alert Mneromas, since he wishes to prove himself by handling this threat alone. Still, he is smart enough to know when he is outmatched.

Rewards

Use the treasure tables (*DMG* 52–53) to generate Mneromas's hoard. The PCs also earn the gratitude of House Orien and at least one free lightning rail trip.

Development

If Obradi or any of his bandits survive, they could escape from jail and threaten PCs at a later date. The characters could find other obviously stolen goods in Mneromas's hoard and attempt to track down their owners.

SELF-FULFILLING PROPHECY

Mid-Level

Irkimorra (female young adult silver dragon; *ECS* 229) has made a name for herself as a ruthless agent. If the deaths of hundreds furthers the Chamber's cause, so be it. Irkimorra doesn't mind getting her claws dirty.

She was shocked, then, when she untangled a thread of the Prophecy to read: "When the human Neri compromises her impartiality, Irkimorra's position falls like a star and does not rise again until Olarune passes before Dravago."

Determined to retain her position, Irkimorra hunts down Neri.

HOOKS

One of the PCs could be a friend or relative of Neri. The party could also be on the scene when Irkimorra makes her first assassination attempt.

SITES

Irkimorra likely has her base in a spined lair in the Library of Hidden Knowledge (page 88), or in the Sea Caves (page 92) just outside the city.

ADVENTURE

Irkimorra can't move directly against Neri (female human aristocrat 5). Her target is a wealthy noble who moves in prominent circles, rarely leaving the well-lit and well-patrolled area of town. As well, the Chamber is already watching Neri's role in unrelated Prophecy strands. Although Irkimorra believes her contribution to the Chamber outweighs any interference she could cause by killing Neri, she has no desire to answer for her actions.

1. Death in the Night: Irkimorra first hires assassins to strike at Neri. She doesn't believe the attempt will succeed, but she wants to test Neri's defenses.

A band of four House Thuranni killers (*ECS* 239) are only too happy to take Irkimorra's money. The assassins pose as street performers outside the city hall. When Neri leaves in her carriage, one leaps into the coachman's seat, kills the hapless man, and takes the reins. Another climbs on the back of the carriage and knocks off the guard. The other two enter the carriage windows.

The PCs witness the attack and are likely to intervene. Whether they do or not, Neri escapes at the first opportunity; she smashes one of her jewels, activating a one-use *word of recall* spell.

2. Poison Apple: For her second attempt, Irkimorra tries a subtle, classic approach. She sends a basket of fruit to Neri's office at city hall. Beneath the real fruit, a hollow apple contains a venomous snake.

Assuming the PCs subdued Neri's would-be assassins, she invites them to her office to properly thank them. While she speaks, the Tiny viper (*MM* 280) slithers out and creeps toward her.

Assuming they act quickly, the PCs save Neri's life—possibly for a second time. The noblewoman, distraught over the attempts on her life, hires them to discover who is after her and stop the attacks.

3. Hunting the Hunter: The PCs probably have divination magic at their disposal and might attempt *commune* or *contact other plane*. Their most useful lead, however, is tracking the assassins.

Asking around (a DC 20 Gather Information check) puts the party in contact with a street vendor who knew the assassins. For a handful of gold he shows the PCs to the assassins' hideout.

Coincidentally, Irkimorra has also entered the assassins' hideout to erase all traces of her presence, and the PCs surprise her. The dragon first tries to pass herself off as a poor relative of one of the assassins, then flees if her deception is uncovered. As a last resort, she fights. Even if Irkimorra escapes, the PCs have enough information to track her down through a *scrying* or *locate person* spell.

4. Confrontation: As a solo agent, Irkimorra has no minions but guards her lair with traps and wards (such as *glyphs of warding* and pits). She would rather face the music than die, though, so if the PCs confront her, she flees to a Chamber stronghold to confess her misdeeds. A Chamber agent approaches the PCs the next day and promises an end to the attacks on Neri, apologizing for the "misunderstanding."

Irkimorra's actions cause her status to fall sharply in the Chamber. She doesn't regain her colleagues' trust for decades—just as the Prophecy foretold.

REWARDS

Neri rewards the characters with 2,000 gp each, plus a beautiful signet ring.

DEVELOPMENT

The characters might have further communication with the Chamber, particularly if they displayed great competence in dealing with Irkimorra. In addition, they have an influential and grateful contact in Neri, whose signet rings can open many doors for them.

Right Place, Right Time

High-Level

Mysterious strangers often hire heroes to explore dangerous areas and recover treasure. This time, though, the patron is a dragon or a dragon's minion. He might not even know he works for a dragon. It could even be someone the PCs have worked with before. But this patron knows more than he's telling.

HOOKS

Whatever the PCs want, the would-be employer offers. Money is no object, nor knowledge, nor even powerful magic items. He seems to know just what the PCs need.

LOCATION

Either the Mystic Glade (page 90) or the Frostbreath Caverns (page 86) works best for this adventure.

ADVENTURE

According to the Prophecy, a dragonmarked character must enter the specified location and fight its guardian, lest a rakshasa rajah go free. The dragon might know this, or could simply desire the treasure. He might even unknowingly be manipulated by a Chamber agent in a multilayered scheme.

1. The Hire: The patron provides the PCs with detailed directions to the location, information on the treasure they seek, and money for miscellaneous expenses. He does not know, however, what lies within or what challenges the party will face.

2. The Voyage: The party likely has access to travel magic; if not, the patron offers to pay the necessary airship or lightning rail fares. No detailed maps or pictures of the location exist (and the patron cannot accurately describe it), so the party can't simply teleport in.

Dangerous creatures roam the area. Consult the random encounter tables for the chosen location for suggestions, or substitute anything properly fearsome to challenge the party, such as a truly horrid umber hulk (*MM* 248) or a nightwalker nightshade (*MM* 195).

3. The Competition: The PCs aren't the only ones looking for the treasure. Any number of seekers serving rival interests could be headed to the same spot. The Dreaming Dark might send a team of Inspired rogues and psions who have no compunctions about killing (*ECS* 240; increase rogue or psion levels by 5). The Aurum might also have an interest in this great treasure, sending a team of dwarf explorers (*ECS* 238; change race to dwarf and increase levels by 5) who attempt first to negotiate with the PCs, then to subdue and abandon them.

4. The Guardian: The area's guardian is a monster unlike any the party has ever faced before. History is made in this titanic battle. In an outdoor location, a marilith (*MM* 44) or a black rock triskelion avatar (*MM4* 8), possibly an embodiment of the Mystic Glade itself, attacks the heroes. In an underground location, the PCs might pass powerful sigils on their journey and find, too late, that they have entered the prison of a daelkyr (*ECS* 278). A greater stone golem (*MM* 136) might guard the underground vault, or the place could be home to the legendary tarrasque (*MM* 240).

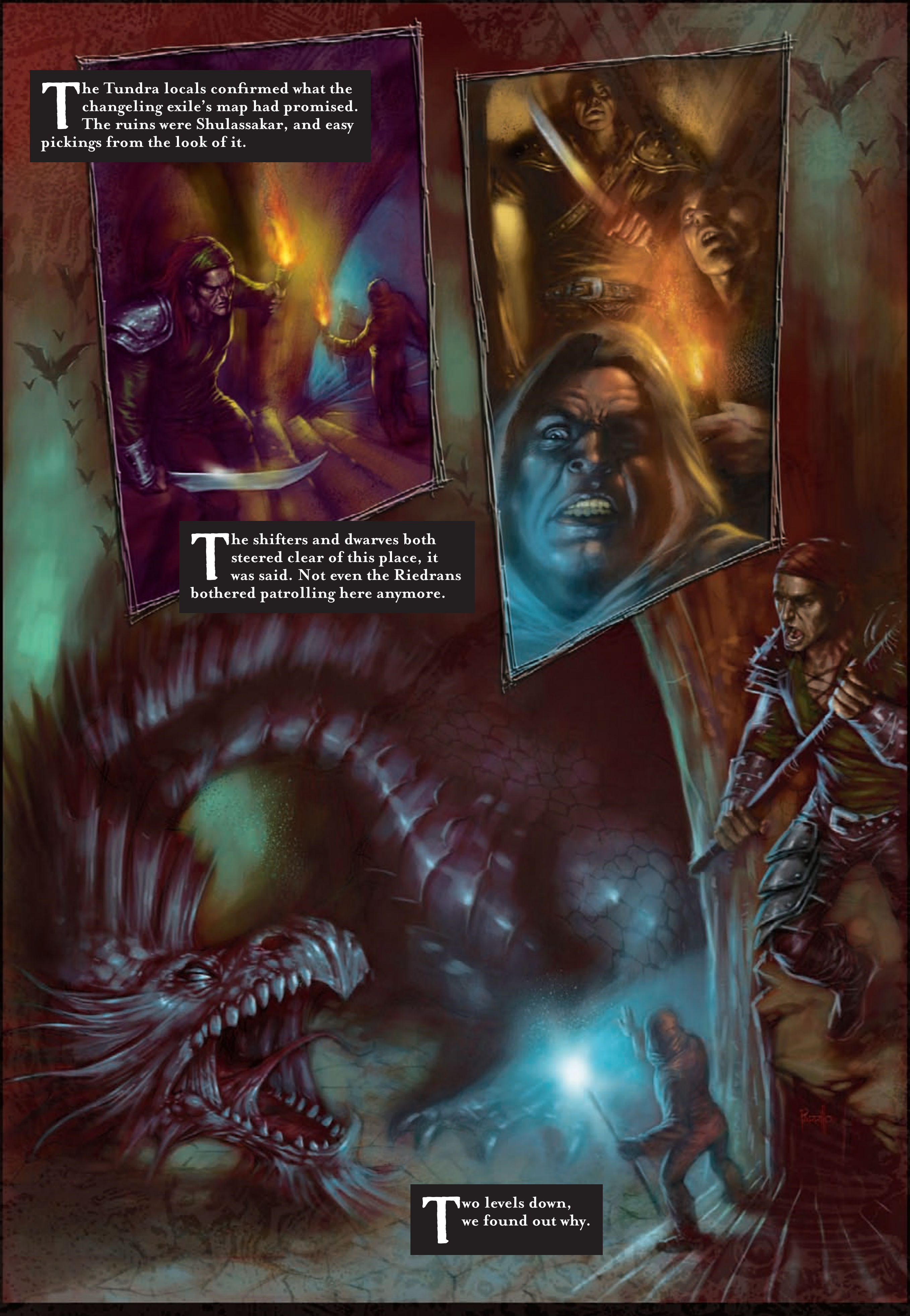
Do the adventurers find the treasure they seek, or a fearsome guardian?

REWARDS

What treasure do the PCs uncover? A guardian so powerful must protect an artifact, such as a *moaning diamond* (*DMG* 281) or, in the Mystic Glade, the *ash spear of Thakash Rin* (*ECS* 271).

DEVELOPMENT

If the PCs recover the artifact, they might be tempted to keep it, earning the wrath of their patron. If they deliver the artifact, their patron might renege on the deal—or worse, he might pay them and then use the artifact in a destructive, evil manner.



The Tundra locals confirmed what the changeling exile's map had promised. The ruins were Shulassakar, and easy pickings from the look of it.

The shifters and dwarves both steered clear of this place, it was said. Not even the Riedrans bothered patrolling here anymore.

Two levels down, we found out why.

CHAPTER THREE

DRAGONS OF SARLONA

The Bright-Eyed Wyrm? Surely you jest, stranger—everyone knows that no dragons dwell in Sarlona. The Storm Guardians? Stories for Adaran children afraid to sleep at night. The Madwyrm? Some Riedran captain's campfire tale grown out of hand. You're as like to find a dragon here in the market square as lurking in steppes or desert. If finding one is your goal, best keep traveling."

—Rumura, gold dragon sage
posing as a human migrant of Syrkarn

The names, knowledge, and habits of the rogue dragons of Khorvaire are known to the scholars and adventurers of that land. The depredations of the wyrms of Xen'drik are logged by House Tharashk prospectors and passed from explorer to explorer in the taverns of Stormreach. And all are aware that Argonnessen is the dragons' home. Sarlona, however, is a land of great mystery: Legends and tales of its dragons reach the outside world rarely, if at all.

Many Khorvairians have heard of the Storm Guardians but consider those legendary dragon wardens of Adar to be nothing more than myth. Those who know of the Chamber can state with authority that Argonnessen has no interest in Sarlona and no presence in that land. As a result, many first-time Sarlonan adventurers and explorers expect never to catch sight of a dragon in the land of the Inspired. A few of those learn the truth the hard way.

A LAND APART

Legendary wyrms make their homes in Syrkarn and the lost islands of Ohr Kaluun. Packs of white and silver dragons dot the Tashana Tundra, and draconic creatures are drawn in great numbers to the power of the Storm Guardians in Adar. The ruins of what are believed to be ancient draconic observatories are frequently unearthed in those parts of Sarlona not under the iron grip of Inspired rule. Even so, the dragons of Argonnessen have shunned Sarlona since the earliest centuries of their own history—and have never divulged their reasons.

Some scholars suggest that Argonnessen has reason to fear Sarlona and its unseen quori masters, though this notion seems laughable to many. Even if the worst tales of the Dreaming Dark are to be believed, the dragons once laid waste to the whole of Xen'drik, and their power shows no signs of having abated in the long centuries since. Others believe that the dragons' absence from Sarlona is a reaction to a coming cataclysm predicted by the Prophecy—whether at the hands of the Inspired or from some yet-unknown source. Still others say that the Prophecy suggests Sarlona is central to future events, but that these are so far off in time that the dragons see no point in preparing for them yet. A few hold that Sarlona is, in fact, absent from the Prophecy—an empty space at its center that terrifies the dragons because they can't comprehend it.

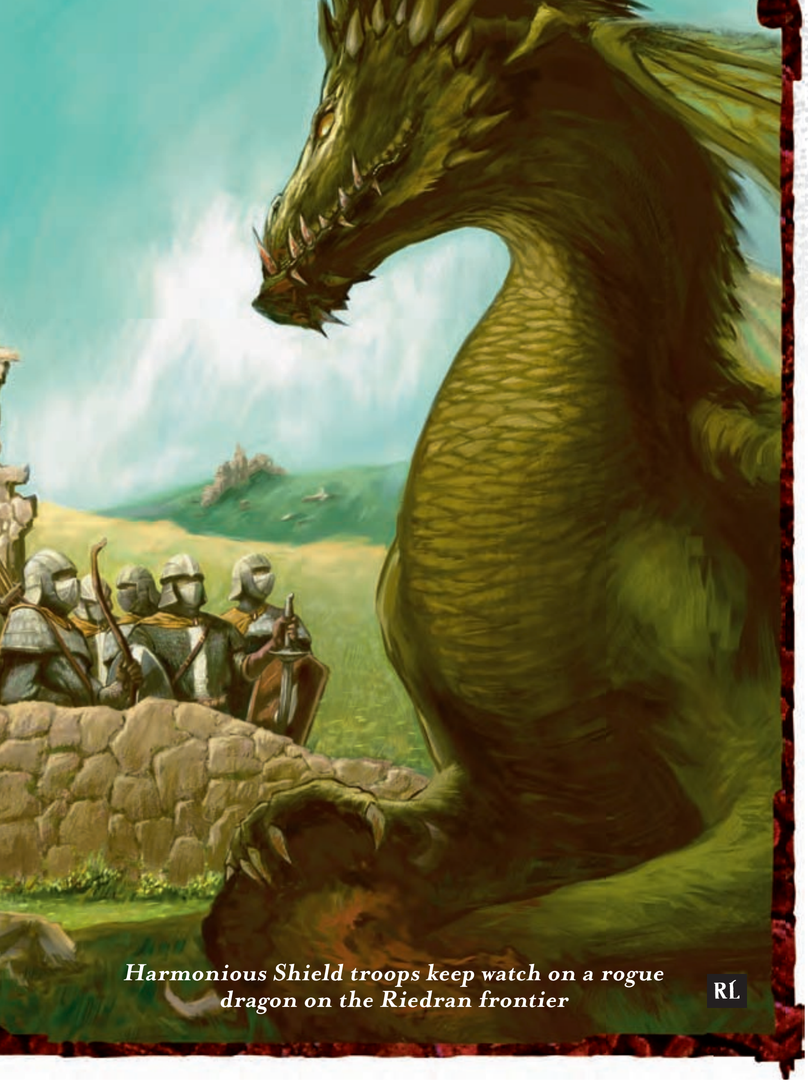
The absence of dragonmarks among the peoples of Sarlona seems to support this last view. However, some dragons of Adar do study the Prophecy, and the great halls of the Storm Guardians are said to be strongholds of draconic power (*SoS* 38). Though Sarlona's rogue dragons number spies and scholars among their ranks, the Chamber and the Conclave maintain a circumspect presence in that land. The dragons of Argonnessen place observers in Riedra—many of them changelings or dragons operating in human form—only with great care. At the same time, a number of dissident groups in Sarlona are whispered to have the covert backing of draconic agents.

Whatever the truth of their long exile from this land, the dragons do not speak of it. Sarlona remains a continent isolated from draconic culture and tradition, cut off from the affairs of Argonnessen and the machinations of the Chamber and the Conclave alike.

SERPENTS AND SAVIORS

Little overt mention of dragons exists in the Inspired-written histories of Sarlona. The masters of that land are adept at reworking history to suit their own needs, so what is known of the early dragons of Sarlona is fragmentary and incomplete. But as the land of the Inspired opens up to Khorvaire in the aftermath of the Last War, scholars are beginning to piece those fragments together into what they believe to be a cohesive whole.

The legends carried to Khorvaire by the Lhazaar expedition and later waves of refugees say little of dragons other than the Storm Guardians. Echoes of lore older than humanity itself describe Sarlona as a couatl stronghold during the Age of Demons, and this land is thought by many to have been the birthplace of that noble race. Couatl ruins still dot the islands of Aventus, the steppes of Syrkarn, and the Riedran province of Khalesh, though any interest the dragons of Argonnessen might have had in these sites appears to have been exhausted millennia before.



Harmonious Shield troops keep watch on a rogue dragon on the Riedran frontier

It is also known that the shulassakar (the feathered yuan-ti) venerate the couatls, seeing themselves as the descendants of that lost race. In Sarlona, shulassakar are said to dwell in ancient Adar ruins dating back to the Age of Demons. Like the shulassakar, the base yuan-ti were born in Sarlona, rising from the blasted ruins of once-great Khunan and naming their new land "Syrkarn." Some sages posit that the creation of the yuan-ti was tied to the near-release of a bound fiend almost twelve hundred years ago—the Syrkarn rajah. However, the supposition that the yuan-ti might be shulassakar tainted by exposure to fiendish magic (and thus a race possessing both fiendish and couatl blood) remains little more than a guess. Certainly that was not the view of the dragons when they allowed yuan-ti exiled from Sarlona to settle in Argonnessen. Only after the destruction of Io'vakas did yuan-ti became a hunted race: Many fled to Xen'drik, where the worst of their kind appear to be ascendant.

Among certain dragon prophets (*MoE* 63) serving lords in Argonnessen, a theory has recently arisen that ties together the legends of couatl, Storm Guardian, and yuan-ti alike. These prophets whisper that Argonnessen's long estrangement from Sarlona involves more than just Prophetic tradition. As the birthplace of the couatls, Sarlona was of prime importance to draconic history and the million-year struggle of the Age of Demons. After the couatls were destroyed, the dragons were left to complete their work and took much of the credit for the combined victory over the rakshasa rajahs. However, many dragons felt great shame at having effectively abandoned the couatls, who made their great sacrifice alone. In the aftermath, it is thought, Sarlona became a kind of prison continent—a land of exile where dragons served life sentences at the site of their race's greatest failure.

The strongest evidence in favor of this view is the Storm Guardians, thought by some to be the last of a once-great order of exiled dragons originally dedicated to protecting the birthplace of the couatls. Today, the seldom-seen Storm Guardians are joined in their defense of the mountain refuge by a host of other draconic creatures, including dragon turtles and sea drakes (*FF* 147) that protect the storm-tossed seas of the Adar horn. However, some believe that the entire continent might once have been under the protection of such draconic guardians, all memorializing the couatls' sacrifice. Over time, as the memory of the fiend wars began to fade in even the longest-lived draconic minds, this collective guilt came under attack. Especially among those dragons focused on the Prophecy, the goal was to look forward, not back. At some point, the dragons turned away from Sarlona, leaving only the Storm Guardians behind to uphold a tradition now lost to dragonkind.

Rogue Wyrms and Forgotten Kings

Rogue dragons have long inhabited Sarlona. However, the desert drakes and mountain guardians of this land are very different from the hoard-wyrms and Chamber exiles of Xen'drik and Khorvaire. A number of Sarlonan rogues fled recently from Argonnessen, for personal or political reasons, choosing the relative peace of Sarlona to the chaos that is Xen'drik. Though exceptions exist, most such first-generation exiles hail from the lands of the Tapestry, just as a majority of Xen'drik exiles arrive there from the unfettered expanses of the Vast (see page 37).

Unlike those of Xen'drik, many rogues of Sarlona are native to that land—descendants of dragons who were here long before the rise of the sorcerer-kings. What part those ancestor dragons might have played in the rule of Sarlona prior to the Sundering remains an open question. That period of great and terrible wars shattered the old kingdoms and paved the way for Inspired rule, and much of the history of old Sarlona was purged when the Inspired remade the continent in their own image.

Fragmentary accounts of the reign of the sorcerer-kings can be found in the legends of Aventus, Corvagura (now part of Riedra), and Khunan (the land on whose ruins the yuan-ti built Syrkarn). Modern sages theorize that some of those ancient rulers could have actually been rogue dragons in human form, building empires in a land their Prophecy-obsessed kin ignored. If this idea is true, it might explain the origins of the devastating conflicts between the sorcerer-kings of Corvagura and the secret shulassakar leaders of Khalesh. If means also that the oft-ridiculed tales of draconic blood flowing in the veins of Khorvaire's human sorcerers might be more than mere fancy.

PLOTS OF THE INSPIRED

Those who know the secrets of Sarlona understand that the quori are the true power behind the Inspired lords of that land. Since consolidating power in Riedra more than a millennium ago, the Inspired have systematically wiped out or subjugated any creatures that might potentially threaten them, from the psionic yuan-ti to many of Sarlona's predatory aberrations. To this day, however, the continent's rogue dragons are shown deference by Riedra in a way that seems at odds with the Inspired stranglehold on order in that land.

Most parts of Riedra remain effectively free of dragons. However, the Harmonious Shield (Riedra's internal security force) takes what might be described as a "secure perimeter" approach to dragon control. Rogue dragons are typically left to their own devices unless they come into conflict with human settlements. Even then, Riedran forces often attempt to drive troublesome rogues into Syrkarn, Adar, or the Tundra before they engage in all-out battle. Only against dangerous psionic dragons does Riedra typically unleash the full force of its power.

This policy might result from the Inspired desire to avoid wasting resources on what might easily become a costly conflict. Maintaining security on the Adar border means that Riedra can ill afford to engage in low-scale draconic turf wars on other frontiers. However, rumors abound of Riedran forces kidnapping Sarlonan wyrmlings or stealing dragon eggs, and it is speculated that the Inspired's policy of quiet containment might have more sinister overtones. Some speak of the Inspired raising young dragons in hidden fortresses, indoctrinating them into the Path of Inspiration with the same techniques used on the ogre mages of Borunan. More unbelievable tales are sometimes spun of clandestine experiments designed to breed draconic vessels suitable for control by the quori.

The quori behind the Inspired are not the same race that once fought the giants in Xen'drik, but the masters of Dal Quor have an insatiable thirst for the history of that lost age. They have studied in considerable detail the devastation the dragons wrought after giant magic defeated the quori and sealed the links to Dal Quor. Likewise, they are fully aware of the more recent history of the Light of Siberys's forays against Aerenal.

To date, the dragons have shown little interest in the quori's rule over Sarlona or the long-term plans of the Dreaming Dark. In adopting an approach of containment over conflict, the quori might simply be attempting to ensure that continues. Whether the darker rumors of the Inspired attempting to build their own draconic army have merit or not, it is reasonable to assume that if Argonnessen ever does take up arms against the Inspired, Riedra will need the rogue dragons of Sarlona firmly on its side.

HOARDS IN SARLONA

The hoards of many Sarlonan rogue dragons resemble those of their cousins in Argonnessen, Xen'drik, and Khorvaire. However, the troubled history of Sarlona—and the Inspired's heavy-handed rewriting of that past in the aftermath of the Sundering—leaves dragon hoards as some of the most complete caches of history on the continent. The coinage of Sarlona's dead kingdoms, lore and magic lost to the great purges, and relics of the sorcerer-kings might all be found in a Sarlonan dragon's lair.

Sarlonan dragons frequently guard magical locations that the Riedrans are happy not to have to defend themselves. As well, by collecting and hoarding the lost treasures of Syrkarn and Ohr Kaluun, the dragons secure those treasures from those who might use them against the Inspired. The allies and affiliations of such rogues are carefully monitored, however, and the Harmonious Shield steps in if powerful magic falls into the wrong hands.

Psionic locations and relics are treated far differently. Riedra keeps a close eye on psionic dragons and the madness that habitually afflicts them.

Even though Sarlona apparently lies outside the focus of the Prophecy, the dragons hid most of its greatest relics away before the rise of the Inspired, keeping it safe in Argonnessen. Whatever magic they left behind was largely destroyed by the Inspired in Riedra, but

GEM DRAGONS IN EBERRON

The psionic gem dragons (*MM2*) are not native to Eberron and are not a part of draconic history, contemporary Argonnessen, or the Prophecy. However, the following campaign option outlines a means for gem dragons to become part of an EBERRON campaign.

It is widely suspected that the Inspired continue to allow rogue dragons in Sarlona partly because their quori masters experiment on these creatures. Just as with the selective breeding of the Chosen over generations to provide the perfect quori host, the Inspired now engage in grotesque experiments to breed new creatures of their own. Over the centuries, the Inspired have perfected a process of creating dragons for the quori to possess. These draconic vessels are the gem dragons, the result of twisted pairings of metallic and chromatic dragons with a hint of fiendish blood. Their inherent beauty is seen as a reflection of their Inspired masters. They are found only in Riedra, and their existence is one of the most closely guarded secrets of that land.

An unpossessed gem dragon has the same statistics as presented in *Monster Manual II* (updated to v. 3.5 rules). A gem dragon hosting a quori spirit takes on the attributes of that possessing spirit (*ECS* 296).

Some younger gem dragons might not have sufficient Charisma to serve as quori hosts, but these creatures are often used as assassins and spies under the command of a quori-possessed dragon.

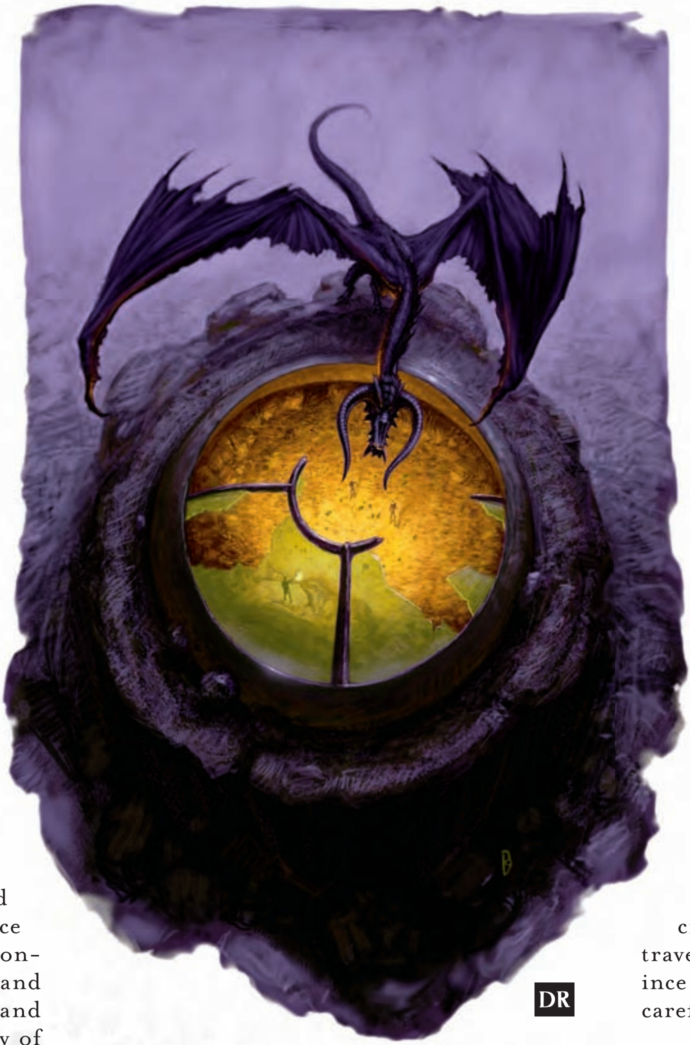
some items can still be found in Syrkarn, Adar, and the Tundra. The mountains of Adar are the greatest repository of powerful magic in Sarlona, including magical locations and artifacts dating from the Age of Demons, such as the legendary *Teeth of the Three* (*SoS* 142). These sites are typically guarded by Storm Guardian allies dedicated to protecting ancient draconic sites from those who would defile them.

PSIONICS AND DRAGONS

It is speculated that a number of the dragons of old Sarlona treated with the shulassakar and the yuan-ti in an attempt to learn the secrets of psionic power. Even today, a loose sect of Sarlonan dragons known as the Gornatha (see page 124) hungers after psionic understanding, coaxing knowledge from the half-giants of Andnemun and the hidden yuan-ti sects of the White Lake and the Plains of Itzaina.

However, the path of psionics is a dangerous one for the children of Siberys. An innate connection to arcane magic flows in a dragon's blood, and for reasons not fully understood, psionic power often twists and debases this force. Among those dragons who explore the psionic mysteries, the fortunate suffer only disfigurement and ill health. Most develop debilitating insanity, then ultimately die. The legendary psionic dragons of Sarlona were all rogues driven mad by their pursuit of that art.

The existence of essence reavers (*SoS* 147) hints that the pursuit of psionics by dragonkind might have roots beyond the arrival of the yuan-ti and the quori in Sarlona. A vicious aberration of the Syrkarn and Riedran deserts, the essence reaver is a vaguely dragonlike creature that absorbs and can wield both magical and psionic power. Like many of the rogue dragons who do the same, these creatures are thoroughly insane, and are among the most feared predators on the continent.



A lost dwarf citadel has new masters

PLACES OF INTEREST

Many of Sarlona's dragons make their homes in traditional caverns or ruins indistinguishable from the lairs of their Xen'drik kin. Other dragons take advantage of the moderate climate of Syrkarn and central Riedra to live nearly their whole lives under open skies. The following locations represent only a small sampling of places where Sarlonan dragons might be found.

DRAGONS' DEEP

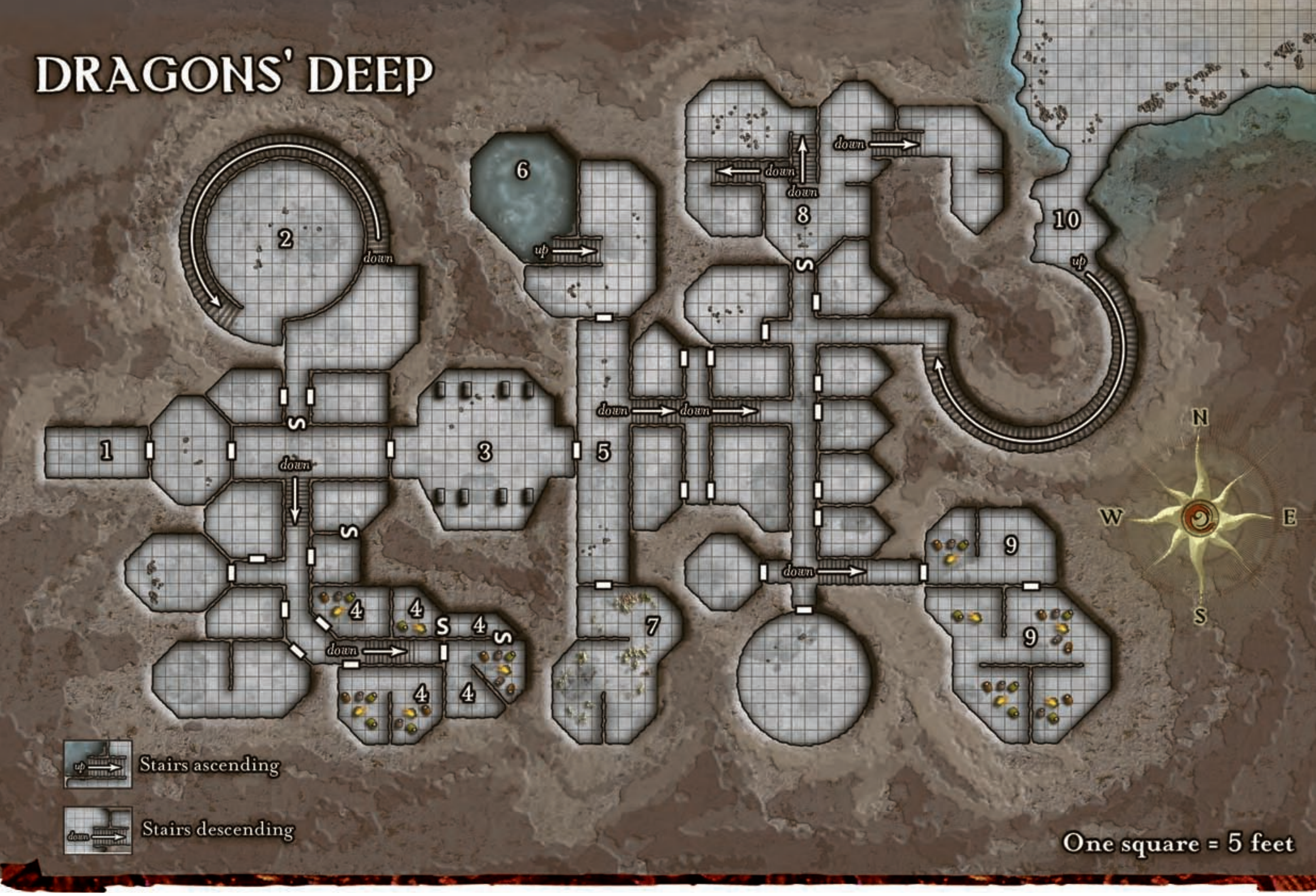
The passes and valleys of the Frostblade Mountains in northern Riedra were once home to the Akiak, a noble nation of dwarves and duergar. Betrayed and broken by the Inspired on the Night of Razor Dreams, the remnants of that people today fight a guerrilla war against Riedra throughout their former mountain homeland. However, many of the Akiak's greatest fortresses were simply sealed and abandoned by the Harmonious Shield. A few of Riedra's rare dragons have laid claim to these former dwarven holds.

APPROACH

The bulk of the Frostblade range runs southward from the Tundra–Riedra frontier, sloping down to the shores of the inland sea of Rhialuun. Getting there typically means crossing Riedran territory. The frontier folk of Dor Maleer are less devoted to the Inspired than the citizens of Nulakesh, but travel through either province requires official consent, careful stealth, or both.

FEATURES

Once in the Frostblades, weather and the normal hazards of mountain terrain (*DMG* 89) are less a threat to the PCs than the ongoing guerrilla war. The Akiak are dedicated to reclaiming their ancestral homeland, and the mountains



see endless skirmishes between Akiak commandos, Riedran troops, and the shifter forces variously allied with both sides.

With their engineering expertise, the Akiak built their fortresses boasting wide corridors and high vaulted ceilings. This suits any dragon who now lairs in them. The normal and secret doors are a full 8 feet wide, large enough for Huge creatures to squeeze through.

All areas of the dwarven complexes show signs of the long-ago battle that destroyed them. Additionally, the stairs and main corridors are scored with claw marks from the dragons' passage. Outside the keyed locations, DMs are free to decide what monsters, treasure, or traps might be found here.

KEYED LOCATIONS

The following features correspond to numbered areas on the map. Dragons' Deep is typical of many destroyed Akiak complexes.

1. Entrance: The peaks loom throughout this area, and snow-shrouded corpses of Riedran skirmish units are not uncommon. No doubt Akiak lurk in the shadows nearby. Suddenly, a veil of mist and snow parts to reveal a gate. Granite pillars frame a narrow cleft at the height of the pass, and the great stone doors that once blocked the entrance now stand open.

Within the gate, a wide entrance hall was once adorned with ornate dwarven relief sculptures. These have been defaced and scarred (by fire, acid, or frost, depending on the DM's choice of dragons for this location). The dragons who lair here now have placed several magic traps within the hall; they make use of the moon garden entrance (area 2), which is more convenient for aerial travel. The shifters (area 4) and the Akiak (area 9) know the location of these traps and can avoid them.

2. Moon Garden: At the top of a circular flight of stairs, this domed chamber of smoothly polished granite rises some 50 feet. A 15-foot-wide hole in the center of the ceiling opens up to the sky beyond. Directly below the hole, the remains of a great crystal lens lie shattered. The Akiak built this meditation hall to capture the light of Eberron's many moons, amplifying and reflecting it through the crystal lens formerly set into the ceiling. The dragons removed the lens to create their primary entrance into and out of the complex. The hole opens up to a wide shelf of stone, beyond which the mountain continues to climb. Flying creatures can make easy use of this exit, but anyone else is in for an arduous, icy descent to the pass below (Climb DC 35).

3. Hall of the Dead: This necropolis was the resting place for the elite warriors and lords of the Akiak, and was the site of one of the fiercest battles when the complex fell. Sepulchers along the walls and throughout the room bear the images of dwarves and duergar. The area radiates moderate necromancy magic, the result of a lingering *gentle repose* effect placed here to preserve bodies through the month-long Akiak funeral rites.

This effect has also left the bodies of a dozen Riedran soldiers preserved here in a grim tableau, the wounds that killed them still fresh after hundreds of years. The

Akiak that also died here have been interred by the strike team in area 9, but the Riedrans were left where they fell. The dragons have so far ignored this unnaturally preserved meal.

4. Shifter Barracks: A pack of Tashana shifters—typically 5th-level barbarians (*DMG* 112; change race to shifter)—has taken over this section of the complex, carefully avoiding the notice of the dragons. They are loose allies of the Akiak but do not take kindly to strangers.

5. Great Hall: This massive gray marble hall is filled with the shattered remains of huge stone tables and benches. It is guarded by a single young adult white dragon (*MM* 77) who quaffs a *potion of invisibility* at the sound of any non-Akiak approaching.

6. Black Pool: A sulfurous reek rises from a hissing fountain of brackish water in the center of this flooded lower chamber. A magic fountain here was once the communal well for the complex. However, it has been tainted by the presence of the dragons, who have channeled the magical flow to turn this room into a pool.

If the dragons inhabiting the complex are not water-friendly, this room can be reworked as a flame bath as described in Gornath the Madwyrm (page 126).

7. Hoard Chamber: The hoard of the dragons who dwell here is amassed in a well-protected vault. Formerly a storehouse for the complex's potent magic, psionics, and weapons, this area remains protected by a number of magic traps the dragons have managed to disable and control. Treasure can be placed here according to the party's level and the DM's plans for the complex. If the PCs are meant to fight the dragons, set the value of the hoard accordingly. If they have no quarrel with the dragons, the hoard chamber might contain a particular magic item sought by either the party or its enemies.

8. Ruined Laboratories: These vast chambers once comprised a multilevel warren of magical, alchemical, and metallurgical research. All lie in ruins now. The first salvo of the Night of Razor Dreams was the psionic assassination of many of the Akiak's greatest magical and psionic researchers, a number of whom worked here. Left to run unchecked, their experiments quickly consumed this place. *Detect magic* and *detect psionics* reveal a dizzying array of auras still twisting throughout this area, their effect to be determined by the DM.

9. Akiak Outpost: An Akiak strike team has established a base of operations in this former barracks wing, making peace with the dragons who allow them to come and go through the complex. Their long-term goal is to see their people once again walk these halls, but they acknowledge the long fight they have ahead of them. They know also that the presence of the dragons has so far prevented the Riedrans from taking a more active interest in the place. The Akiak thus do their best to curry favor with the dragons, hoping to gain true allies in their struggle.

10. Deep Crystal Mines: The entrance to this area is a storage site for mining equipment. Beyond it extend miles of unworked stone caverns. The walls of these caves are shot through with gleaming veins of crystal that shift from white to deep blue. Deep crystal (*EPH* 182) is prized for its strength and psionic resonance, and is used in the construction of weapons and the *hanbalani* monoliths of the Inspired. These caverns have not echoed to the sound of Akiak picks for over seven hundred years, but they are far from empty. A scattering of talismans and arcane tokens at the entrance hints that the inhabitants fear this place. A successful DC 20 Search or Survival check to note tracks in the caverns indicates that no dragon has ever passed this way.

Over the centuries since the Night of Razor Dreams, the psionically resonant nature of these caverns has been twisted by the latent magical energies seeping down from the Akiak's ruined laboratories (area 8). As a result, the caverns could be home to phrenic creatures (*EPH* 205), spawn of Tiamat (*MM4* 128), or even quori that have become trapped in the darkness of this crystal prison. What creatures lurk in these unmapped caverns—and what secrets they protect—is left to the DM to determine.

DRAGONS' DEEP ENCOUNTERS

(Check 1/hour, 10% chance)

d%	Encounter	EL
01–10	Akiak scout (dwarf ranger 4, *DMG* 121)	5
11–20	Akiak commandos (4 dwarf fighter 2, *DMG* 117) led by 1 dwarf rogue 3/fighter 4 (*DMG* 117, 123)	9
21–25	Riedran patrol (6 human fighter 3) led by human fighter 6 (*DMG* 117)	9
26–30	1d3 shifter barbarian 5 (*DMG* 112; change race to barbarian)	5–8
31–45	Young adult white dragon (*MM* 77)	8
46–55	2d6 zombie young adult white dragons (*Dr* 198)	7–12
56–65	2d6 whitespawn hordelings (*MM4* 156)	2–8
66–75	1d4 blackspawn raiders (*MM4* 130)	4–8
76–90	Half-black dragon human fighter 4 (*MM* 146)	6
91–95	Hashalaq quori (*SoS* 155)	9
96–100	1d4 tsucora quori (*ECS* 296)	7–11

THE HEART OF IO

In the sun-blasted steppes of Syrkarn, a gray basalt monolith rises from a plain of shattered stone. Beneath it lies a network of burial chambers used over the ages by dragons and sorcerer-kings. The complex is now occupied by a group of exiles from the surface world (yuan-ti, Riedran dissidents, Akiak, or any other group of the DM's choosing). In addition, the site conceals a magical location that has endured since the Age of Demons—the *Heart of Io*.

APPROACH

The area around the monolith is a 60-mile-wide desert wasteland, a kind of inverse oasis within the fertile steppes. No water flows here, and heat dangers (*DMG* 303) are a risk to any attempting to locate the site.

FEATURES

From a half-mile away across the empty steppes, a black spire can be seen rising against the cloudless sky. Close up, the shape resolves itself into a monolith rising from the center of field of black shards. The sun is hot above, the whispering wind the only sound.

Basalt rubble surrounds the monolith to a distance of approximately 300 feet. The shattered rock makes it difficult to approach with any degree of stealth: Move Silently checks take a –10 penalty. Additionally, creatures must succeed on DC 10 Balance checks to run or make double moves.

IMPORTANT FEATURES

No detailed map is provided for this location. The placement of the following features is at the DM's discretion, as is the composition of guardian forces.

Guard Posts: Staggered around the perimeter of the basalt plain are four underground bunkers. Each consists of a single room with an adjoining latrine. Narrow window slits at the junction of ceiling and wall open up just above the ground line, allowing a clear view in three directions. From above, each guard post appears as a low rise of sand and stone.

Four psicrystals serve as a first line of defense, each one the servant of a guard in one of the bunkers. A DC 30 Spot check or Search check is needed to note a psicrystal among the rubble, or DC 25 Spot check to discern the closest guard post.

Monolith: The basalt monolith rises some 80 feet into the air. Despite its age, it shows no signs of weathering. The entrance to the caverns beneath can be found with a successful DC 30 Search check, but it features a *psionic lock* that can be opened only by imbuing it with 1 power point. A DC 25 Disable Device check can reveal this mechanism; a DC 35 Disable Device check can bypass it. The entrance is part of the monolith's base and can't be destroyed without burying the entrance under a massive pile of rubble, possibly toppling the entire monolith.

Caverns: A maze of caverns makes up the complex—a mix of well-traveled passageways and areas that have not been entered in millennia. Whether the current inhabitants fear those locations or simply have no reason to explore them is up to the DM.

Inhabited areas within the complex include a barracks, a combined kitchen and dining hall, and private quarters for the leaders of the exiles who hide out here.

Temple of Io: One wing of the underground complex has been rebuilt as a temple to Io, dragon deity of magic and knowledge. The exiles who shelter in the complex worship a brass dragon (juvenile, young adult, or adult) who has managed to convince them that she is

MAGICAL LOCATION: THE HEART OF IO

A thousand years before the Inspired rose to power, Sarlona was a land of ancient empires. The greatest of the sorcerer-kings are said to have been entombed in a place of draconic power dating back to the Age of Demons. Its original name is long lost, but those who search today for this legendary site call it the *Heart of Io.*

Lore: Characters can gain the following pieces of information about the heart of Io by making Knowledge (arcana) checks or bardic knowledge checks at the appropriate DCs.

DC 15: The *Heart of Io* is the legendary tomb of the Sarlonan sorcerer-kings.

DC 20: Though the power of the Khunan sorcerer-kings was formidable, the *Heart of Io* holds magic of an older age. Dragons built this place when the world was new, and the bones of their greatest warriors are interred here.

DC 25: The *Heart of Io* is more than just a draconic tomb. The magic that permeates its stone walls dates back to the Age of Demons, though its original purpose is long lost.

DC 30: Though no dragonmarks appear in Sarlona, the magic of the *Heart of Io* augments the power of existing dragonmarks or bestows a temporary scarlike mark with mystical power on any living creature.

Description: See the Chamber of the Heart description for details.

Prerequisite: Only living creatures not of the outsider type with at least 5 Hit Dice can access the power of the *Heart of Io*.

Location Activation: The silver-black fire burns in a 10-foot radius. It provides bright illumination throughout the chamber, and it is hot enough that creatures within the chamber are subject to heat dangers (*DMG* 303). A creature must willingly step into the flame and remain there for 4 rounds to partake of the location's power. It takes no hit point damage from the flames but must succeed on a DC 20 Fortitude save each round or take 1d6 points of Charisma damage. A creature reduced to 0 Charisma collapses within the flames, taking 1d6 points of damage each round. Other creatures can easily pull it to safety, but rescuers each take 1d4 points of damage from the magical flames.

Recharge: Once the *Heart of Io* has granted its power to five creatures, it cannot do so again for 1 year or until all five creatures are slain. Slain creatures who are raised or resurrected lose the power granted to them by the *Heart*.

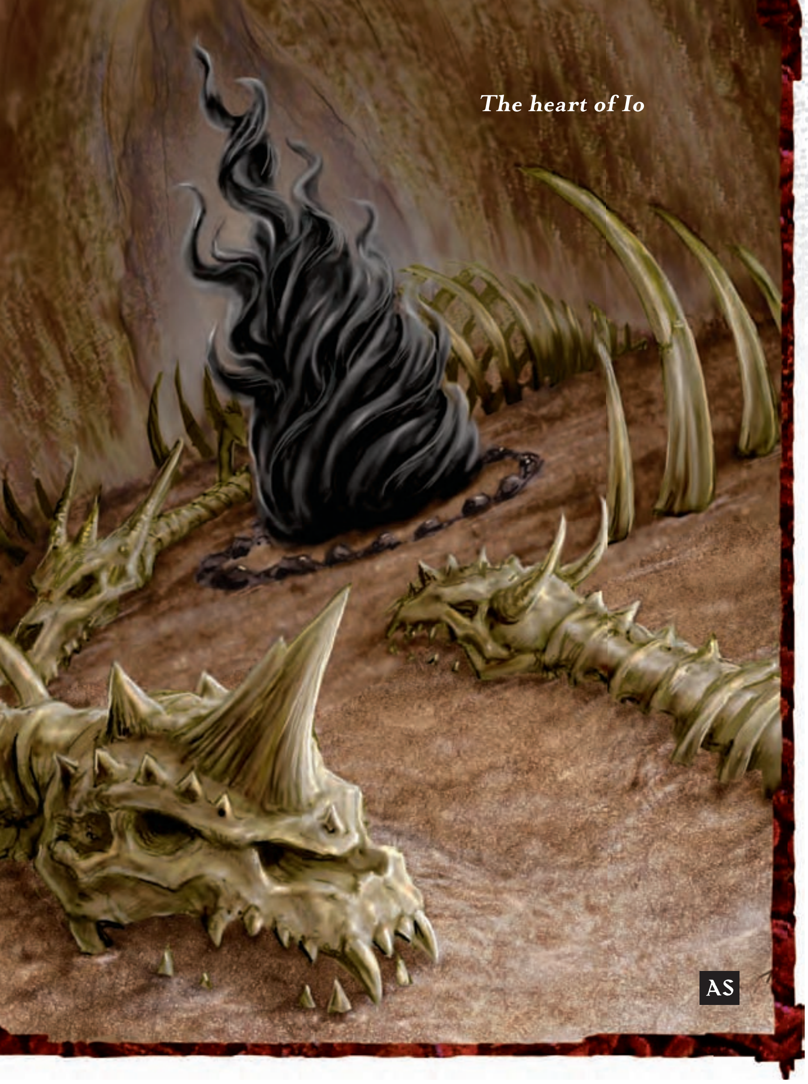
Special Ability (Sp): Creatures that already possess a true or aberrant dragonmark can use their least or aberrant dragonmark spell-like abilities an additional three times per day.

A creature that does not possess a dragonmark gains the use of one of the spell-like abilities granted by the Aberrant Dragonmark feat (*ECS* 47) three times per day. A scarlike symbol resembling a dragonmark in the shape of a heart appears on the creature's forearm (or equivalent) when it uses the spell-like ability, slowly fading over the following 10 rounds. This symbol is not a dragonmark, nor does it affect the ability of a member of a dragonmarked race to obtain a dragonmark in the future. If such a character obtains a dragonmark while the power of the *Heart of Io* is still active, the power ends for that creature. Even creatures not of a dragonmarked race can benefit from this power.

Duration: The power of the *Heart of Io* lasts for 1 year.

Aura: Strong transmutation.

Ability Value: 12,000 gp (2,400 gp per affected creature).



The heart of Io

an avatar of Io. The cunning creature plays on the history of this place and the legends of Syrkarn to expand her influence through the local tribes of the steppes, claiming that the *Heart of Io* is but a small sampling of her power.

Access to the hidden Chamber of the Heart is by way of a stone door. In addition to guards, it is protected by magic or psionic traps at a level appropriate for the PCs.

Chamber of the Heart: The tombs of Khunan's sorcerer-kings line the corridor leading to a draconic ossuary and were looted centuries ago. From ahead, a faint silvery light can be seen. When the PCs enter the chamber, the illumination flares as a jet of silver-black flame rising within a circle of rough obsidian stones. The bones of ancient dragons fill the area, making the chamber floor difficult terrain and providing cover.

This flame is the *heart of Io* (see sidebar), and it is guarded by the evil creatures—mostly yuan-ti—that have recently partaken of its power. Recharging this magical location requires the PCs to slay its defenders first.

HEART OF IO ENCOUNTERS

(Check 1/hour, 12% chance)

d%	**Encounter**	**EL**
01–20	1d4 yuan-ti purebloods (*MM* 263)	3–7
21–30	1d4 yuan-ti halfbloods (*MM* 264)	5–9
31–40	1d4 yuan-ti abominations (*MM* 264)	7–11
41–50	Juvenile-adult brass dragon in humanoid form (*MM* 79)	8–12
51–60	Half-giant hunting party (4 half-giant ranger 3, *EPH* 12, *DMG* 122)	8
61–65	Half-giant scout (half-giant ranger 5, *EPH* 12, *DMG* 122)	6
66–70	1d6 witchknives (*MM3* 194)	4–9
71–80	1d4 basilisks (*MM* 23)	5–9
81–95	2d4 Large monstrous scorpions (*MM* 287)	5–9
96–100	Essence reaver (*SoS* 147)	9

OHR KALUUN HOARD

Rumors of a lost dragonshard trove point to an obscure Ohr Kaluun island. There lie the ruins of a port city that have become a battleground for the forces of Riedra, the smuggling cabal known as the Dream Merchants, and the dark wizards of the Heirs of Ohr Kaluun.

APPROACH

The waters around the largest island in the archipelago, Ohr Kel, are patrolled by Riedran forces. Elsewhere, smugglers and aquatic monsters are a constant threat. Travelers arriving at the unnamed island they seek have no trouble finding a safe and hidden landing spot.

FEATURES

The island is only 10 miles across. A sprawling city once stood on the western shore, with a wizard's fortress occupying the high land to the east. Now, overgrown ruins are all that remain.

Farther inland, what seemed to be hills from a distance are revealed as the straight lines of ruined city walls, overgrown now with vines and brush. An unnatural quiet hangs over the area, the din of birds in the forest ahead seeming to shift away.

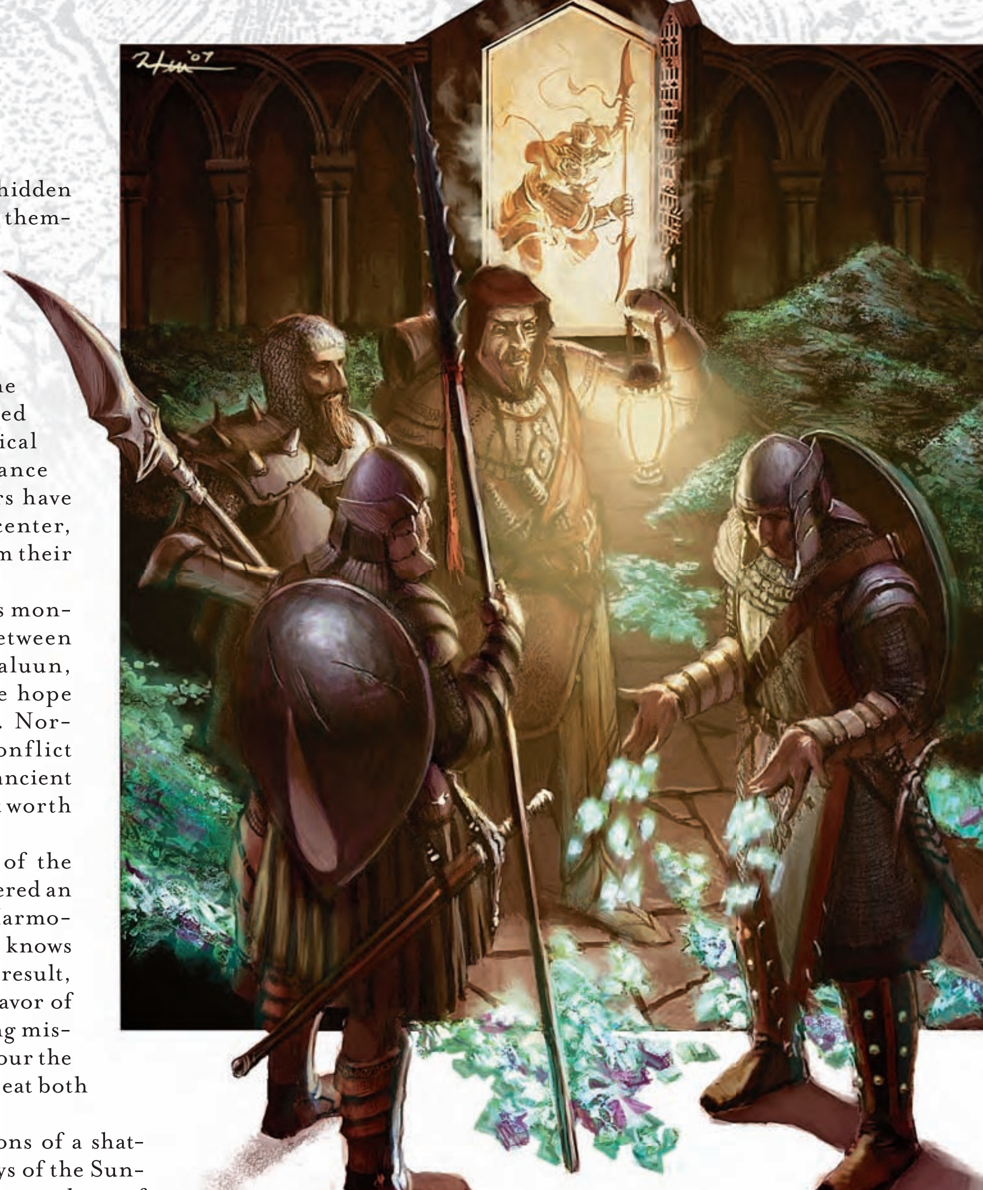
IMPORTANT FEATURES

No detailed map is provided for this location. The placement of the following features is at the DM's discretion, as is the composition of guardian forces.

Abandoned Smugglers' Outpost: Close to the beach where the PCs disembark, a low mound of earth reveals the former entrance to a smugglers' base. This site was a carefully laid-out series of tunnels and underground storage areas (DC 15 Spellcraft check to reveal signs that *soften earth and stone* was used to assist in the excavation). The tunnels have been recently razed; a successful DC 20 Search check determines the event occurred within the past six months. Afterward, whoever was responsible for the demolition backfilled much of the area with tons of dirt and rock. Another DC 20 Search check reveals signs that a Huge or larger creature did the digging.

Riedran Fort: A force of water soldiers (elite Riedran special forces; see the encounter table) have set up a well-defended camp in the shelter of a ruined city gate. From there, they scout the island, monitor the movements and operations of the Dream Merchants, and carry out a deadly game of cat-and-mouse with the Heirs of Ohr Kaluun.

The base is a standard military field station, but a number of semipermanent structures cobbled together from materials taken from the ruins suggests that the Riedrans plan to be here for some time.



At the heart of an Ohr Kaluun war maze, great riches and greater danger await

The camp has a three-tiered perimeter of hidden guard posts, and the water soldiers pride themselves on not being seen by their foes until they choose to reveal themselves.

Dream Merchant Outpost: After the destruction of their former outpost, the Dream Merchants have established a more defensible position in the ruins of an ancient temple. The collapsed upper levels have been fitted with mechanical and magical traps that protect the entrance to the lower levels. There, the smugglers have set up a rough barracks and command center, reclaiming what equipment they could from their abandoned outpost.

From this site, the Dream Merchants monitor the running battles on the island between Riedran troops and the Heirs of Ohr Kaluun, carefully staying clear of the fray in the hope that neither side gains the upper hand. Normally, the smugglers avoid any possible conflict with Riedran forces, but the rumors of the ancient hoard of dragonshards hidden here make it worth the risk.

From their position in the middle of the conflict, the Dream Merchants have discovered an important fact. Both the Heirs and the Harmonious Shield believe that the other faction knows the location of the dragonshard trove. As a result, each side refrains from all-out assault in favor of skirmish attacks and intelligence-gathering missions. Meanwhile, the Dream Merchants scour the island in search of the lost site, hoping to beat both sides to the plunder.

Bastion of the Heirs: The foundations of a shattered keep are all that remain from the days of the Sundering, but the Heirs of Ohr Kaluun make good use of the dungeons beneath this ancient ruin. A sect of that dark magic order has claimed this site, using the tunnels, chambers, and catacombs as a base of operations from which to gather the lore and relics of a lost age. The remains of two round towers rise from the rubble, high enough to give watchers a clear view of anyone approaching the site.

Through a collapsed well, the Heirs use levitation magic to move between the surface and a guardhouse below. The order patrols the forest around the ruins, and slays any intruders on sight.

The Heirs' base is a veritable treasure trove of ancient magical knowledge and lore, but breaking into it is not a task for the faint of heart. The sect's wizards guard the complex around the clock, and the magic wards they set throughout its corridors and caverns are designed to destroy invaders in a variety of painful ways (as determined by the DM).

Dragon's Lair: Deep beneath the shattered keep lie the caverns that have become the lair for this sect's leader. This dragon was discovered by the Heirs in the island's war maze, held in some kind of magical stasis. Since being awakened, the dragon (any color; approximately CR 12) has claimed to be one of the sorcerer-kings of old. His mastery of arcane power and knowledge of ancient lore has inspired the Heirs to follow him without question. The dragon knows of the millennia-old dragonshard trove and has turned all the resources of the sect to finding it. However, his larger motivations are up to the DM to determine.

Dark Temple: Hidden in a sheltered copse of vine-choked trees, this fallen temple was once a shrine to the sorcerous power of Ohr Kaluun. Though the interior has been largely overgrown, the nave remains bare: Plants seemingly are unable to grow there. At the center of this barren space, a hexagonal pillar stands as a shrine to the Dark Six, its features unnaturally free of the ravages of time. Great magical power (as suits the DM's campaign needs) is held within the pillar, as well a key that reveals the dragonshard trove hidden within the island's war maze.

The War Maze: The war mazes of Ohr Kaluun were labyrinthine fortresses created by the ancient lords of that land. A war maze is the ultimate deathtrap dungeon, featuring devious mechanical and magical defenses of the DM's devising. As well, a host of creatures might inhabit a war maze, from skulks (*FF* 154) and Riedran exiles to construct warriors and the spirits of long-dead sorcerer-lords that have dwelt there since the Sundering.

Shard Chamber: At the center of the war maze lies the treasure that the Riedrans, the Dream Merchants, the Heirs of Ohr Kaluun, and the PCs all seek. A fortune in Khyber dragonshards is hidden here, collected and stored by the sorcerer-kings of old before its location was lost in the Sundering. Potent magical defenses and construct or undead guardians protect the shard chamber, as do unexpected foes. Agents of the Lords of Dust found this site years before but were trapped by the magical defenses of the place. Once freed, they claim the trove as their own and slay any who oppose them.

Most of the shards are small (worth 4d4 × 75 gp each), while some 10% are greater shards (worth 4d4 × 500 gp). If the shards are to be claimed as treasure, base the number of shards found at the site on the party's level.

OHR KALUUN HOARD ENCOUNTERS

(Check 1/hour, 10% chance)

d%	Encounter	EL
01–05	2d4 skulks (*FF* 154)	4–8
06–10	1d2 ogre mages (*MM* 200)	8–10
11–15	Riedran spy (changeling rogue 5/assassin 1, *ECS* 12, *DMG* 123, 180)	6
16–30	Heirs of Ohr Kaluun war party (4 human sorcerer 2/rogue 1) led by 1 human sorcerer 6/rogue 3 (*DMG* 123, 125)	10
31–45	Riedran water soldier patrol (4 human ranger 3) led by 1 human ranger 5/monk 4 (*DMG* 119, 122)	10
46–55	1d4 Dream Merchant scouts (human rogue 3, *DMG* 123)	3–7
56–60	1d4 Dream Merchant enforcers (human lurk 5, *CP* 13)	5–9
61–65	Rakshasa (*MM* 211)	10
66–75	1d4 zakya rakshasas (*ECS* 297)	8–12
76–85	1d4 ghost fighter 5 (*MM* 117)	7–11
86–90	Ghost necromancer 13 (*EH* 125)	13
91–95	1d4 boneclaws (*MM3* 17)	5–9
96–100	Shield guardian (*MM* 223)	8

WAR ZONE RANGE

For more than a millennium, the might of Riedra has thrown itself against the defenders of Adar and its people. Though most folk of the mountain refuge have never seen one in the flesh, dragons receive an almost holy reverence in this land. All Adarans know that dragons created their mountains, and that the draconic power of the Storm Guardians has protected them since long before the Riedran siege began.

However, not all the dragons of the mountains fit the noble mold of the average Adaran's expectations. For many recent Argonnessen expatriates, the Storm Guardians' mythical reputation is an insult added to the injury of bitter exile. Most such rogues simply establish territories far from Korrandar, often along the storm-battered cliffs of the Barren Sea. However, a rare few dragons join the age-old conflict against those the Storm Guardians seek to protect.

Along the northern extents of Jathara Sound, the natural border between Adar and Syrkarn, a Riedran outpost is served by an unlikely ally—a chaotic neutral young adult silver dragon (*MM* 87) who has become an agent of the Harmonious Shield. Haurungad was a wyrmling when his family fled Argonnessen and brought him into exile. Though lacking the lawful bent of most Riedrans, the dragon follows the Path of Inspiration zealously. In the Riedran belief in ascending to a higher state of being, he senses echoes of the dimly remembered faith of Argonnessen. Though he can be unpredictable at times, the dragon is steadfastly loyal toward the troops with which he serves.

APPROACH

The war zone frontier between Riedra and Adar is a harsh and unforgiving landscape. Neither the hard-hitting fire soldiers of the Harmonious Shield nor the Adarans defending the mountain passes have any patience for adventurers or explorers. Wise parties avoid the forces on either side of this thousand-year struggle.

PCs traveling within Adar might be teamed up with the guides of the Summit Road (*SoS* 30), whether they actively seek the dragon's lair or simply stumble upon this adventure location in the course of their travels.

FEATURES

Adar is a land of endless mountains and fierce storms that rage and abate as if by conscious design (*SoS* 19). The winds in the peaks and passes are always moderate or stronger (*DMG* 95), and twisting mountain trails often reduce spotting distance (*DMG* 90).

The steady lash of rain and snow often obscures all sight beyond a few feet, and the relentless rise of the high mountain pass forces all to fight for breath. No Adaran patrols can be seen, but they are no doubt watching closely. Such patrols deal harshly with any suspected of being in league with the Riedrans.

Suddenly, a massive skeletal maw appears through a break in the sleet. A dragon's skull some 20 feet in length juts from the rock outcropping. Its open mouth screams a silent warning, and in the shadow beneath it, a small cave opens up into darkness.

IMPORTANT FEATURES

No detailed map is provided for this location. The placement of the following features is at the DM's discretion, as is the composition of guardian forces.

Riedran Fort: Since allying himself with Riedra five years ago, Haurungad has adopted a territory along the mountainous Adar-Borunan frontier. There, the dragon works with one of the small fortresses (known as "tams" in Riedra) that mark the war zone. The fort holds some two hundred fire soldiers (lightly armored troops specializing in hitting hard and fast; see the encounter table) and Riedran regulars under the command of a captain named Shaalas.

The Riedran garrison operates on high alert at all times, even when not actively engaging in skirmish operations within Adar. Discipline and duty are a way of life for the Harmonious Shield. Intruders see the inside of a Riedran fort only as prisoners.

Hermit's Cave: Below a narrow mountain pass three days from the Riedran fort, a fossilized and fractured dragon's skull juts up from a bluff of splintering shale. The great black skull overhangs the entrance to a small cavern, hidden behind a stunted screen of wind-whipped scrub pine. Within, signs of ongoing habitation include a pile of bearskins, a half-filled rainwater bucket, and a collection of carved wooden instruments on a stone shelf.

Riedran troops call this pass the Noose, for both its steep, arrow-straight rise and the number of deadly skirmishes that have taken place here over the years. They know a mad hermit who dwells in the cave, and they obey Shaalas's orders to leave him alone. The Adarans who patrol this territory see the hermit as a Riedran sympathizer, but they have bigger concerns than this harmless exile.

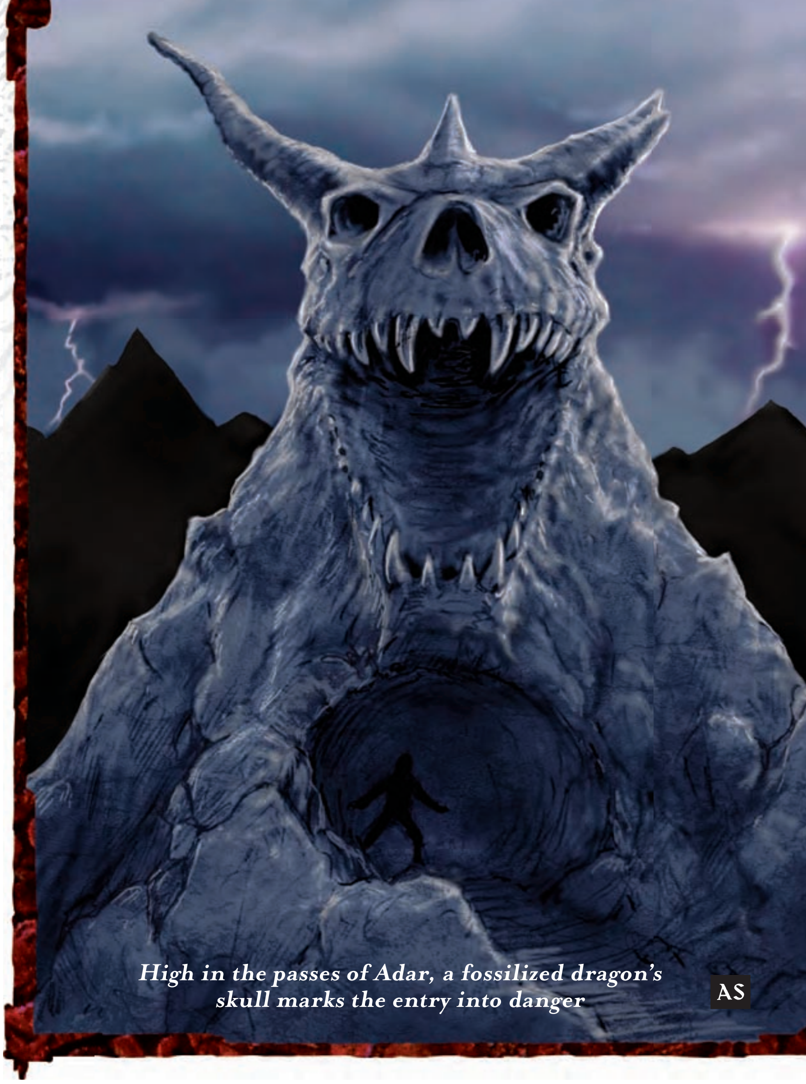
What neither the Adarans nor the rank-and-file Riedran troops suspect is that the hermit is actually Haurungad in disguise. The dragon lairs here when in human form, using his hermit identity to approach any non-Riedran travelers in the area. He is as cunning as he is duplicitous (Bluff +16); the dragon plays the role of a harmless fool in an attempt to befriend the party. To win sympathy, he feigns great hunger (adjusting his form to appear near starvation). He then assesses a travelers' motivations before offering to lead them to a secret location of great interest (treasure, ruins from the Age of Demons, a secret Riedran outpost, and so on). If the PCs fall for this ruse or knowingly play along, Haurungad takes them on a pointless, wandering journey through the mountains as he plies them for information to be passed on to Shaalas. When he is satisfied, he abandons or kills the travelers as the mood strikes him.

Lair Entrance: A two-day hike farther up into the mountains, the dragon's lair proper is hidden beneath the ruins of a stone watchtower dating from before the Sundering. Now little more than a circular stone wall atop a windswept rise, the tower's scattered remains are spread across the slopes beneath it, making for a hazardous ascent (Climb DC 20). With no ground-level entrance, access to the interior can be had only by flying over or scaling the 20-foot crumbling walls (Climb DC 15). Once inside, the PCs can explore a field of shattered rubble that hides the secret entrance to the dragon's lair.

WAR ZONE RANGE ENCOUNTERS

(Check 1/hour, 12% chance)

d%	Encounter	EL
01–10	1d4 very young blue dragon Storm Guardian allies (*MM* 73)	4–8
11–15	1d4 avalanchers (*MM3* 13)	5–9
16–30	Riedran fire soldier patrol (4 human fighter 2, *DMG* 117) led by 1 human fighter 4/ranger 4 (*DMG* 117, 122)	9
31–45	Adaran Summit Road strike force (4 human monk 2, *DMG* 119) led by 1 kalashtar soulknife 8 (*ECS* 16, *EPH* 26)	9
46–50	1d4 quorbound wolf Riedran spies (*SoS* 150)	3–7
51–60	1d4 tusk terrors (*MM5* 182)	8–12
61–70	1d4 ambush drakes (*MM3* 8)	5–9
71–80	1d4 windscythes (*MM4* 177)	4–8
81–90	1d4 wyverns (*MM* 259)	6–10
91–95	Huge air or earth elemental (*MM* 96, 97)	7
96–100	1d2 yrthaks (*MM* 262)	9–11



High in the passes of Adar, a fossilized dragon's skull marks the entry into danger

The massive stone door appears to be a rough slab set across a low pile of rubble. It can be located with a DC 25 Search check, but it takes a DC 40 Strength check to push the massive portal open (up to six characters can attempt at once).

Dragon's Lair: A system of underground caverns is protected by a few nasty magical traps of the DM's choice and four well-trained ambush drakes (*MM3* 8). The lair is also guarded by a squad of six Riedran soldiers (fighter 3) that mutinied more than two years ago from Shaalas's command. The six decided that secretly protecting a dragon's lair offers greater job security than yet another suicidal raid up the Noose, and they are now officially missing in action. Proof of their service would likely undercut Haurungad's relationship with the Riedran captain.

WHITE WATER HARBOR

Along a section of unregarded coastline in the southwestern Riedran province of Rhiavhaar, the remains of a Sarlonan port city rise from the churning waves. As with many such places abandoned in the upheaval of the Sundering, time and the elements have erased almost all sign of habitation here. However, this ancient site holds a secret known only to the dragon scholars who clandestinely study it. This inhospitable beachhead marks the place from which the Lhazaar expedition set out three thousand years before, bringing with it the first large-scale migration of humans to Khorvaire.

APPROACH

The ruined city lies along a stretch of open shoreline easily accessible by water or air. The ruins just beneath the waves constantly lash the water to foam, but several clear channels (formerly broad avenues between now-submerged buildings) can be easily navigated to shore or a suitable mooring spot.

Overland, the harbor can be approached through a wide belt of marshland that follows the line of a slow-flowing river. Clandestine travel through Rhiavhaar is easier than in many other parts of Riedra, but it still presents a challenge. The province features a good number of dissidents (including the Dream Merchants smugglers) who might assist any who seek this ancient site.

The raging sea churns even more furiously than normal as it smashes against a rocky beach. A muddy river cuts a steep course through sandstone banks before being swallowed by white water. Shattered stone ruins jut up from breakers that crash loudly as they hit the shore. Across the beach, a cold wind tears at scattered stands of salt-stunted trees. No signs of life disturb the scene.

FEATURES

In the millennia since the Lhazaar expedition set forth, the relentless sea has carved away much of this area's former coastline. The city that stood here has been forgotten, but its ruined foundations still stab upward like weathered bones from the sand.

KEYED LOCATIONS

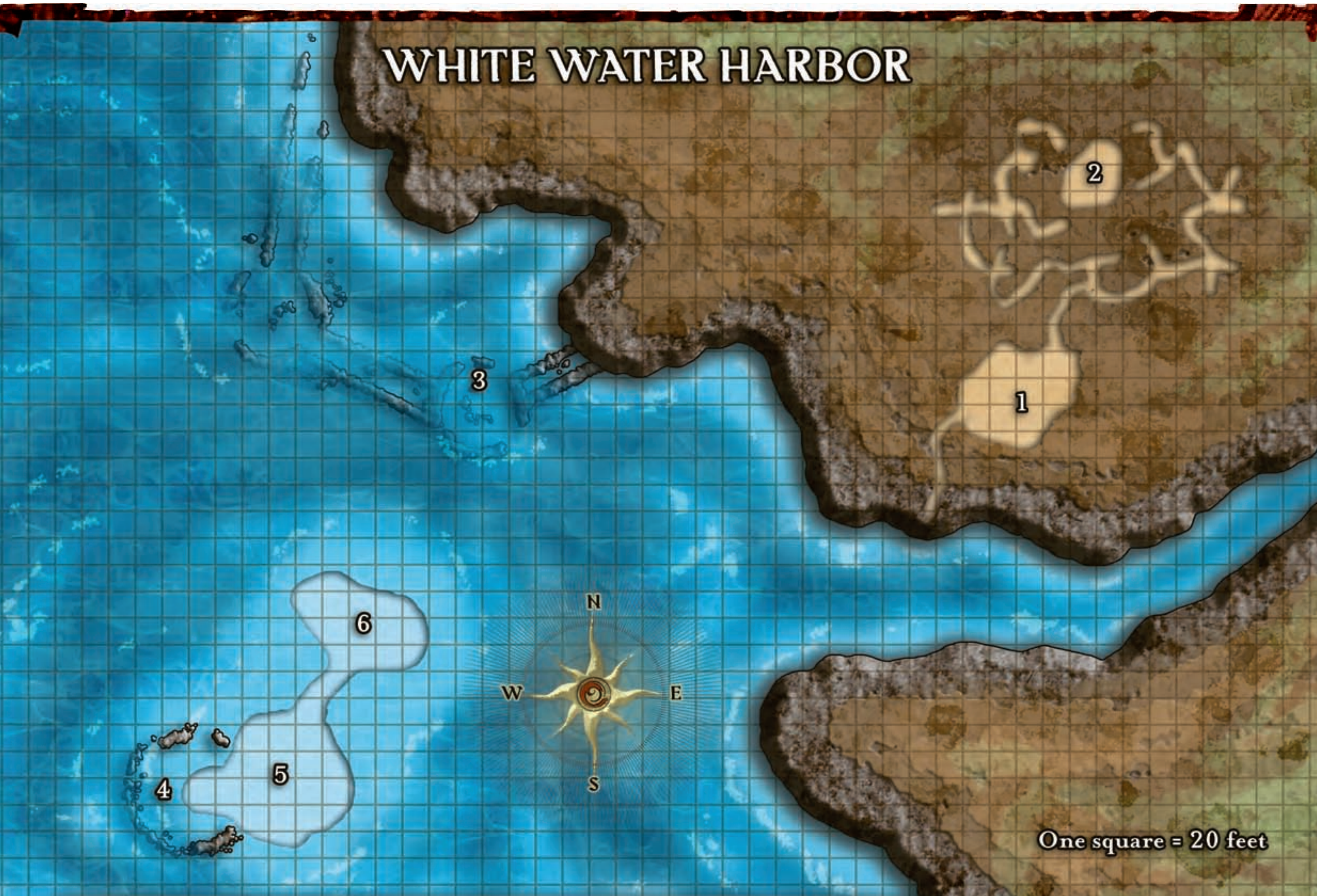
The following features correspond to numbered areas on the map.

1. Abandoned Lair: Where the river has cut its way through sandstone banks over the years, it has exposed an opening that must have once been concealed. A wide tunnel leads to a cavern showing signs of a former dragon's lair, but the cave has not been inhabited for centuries.

2. Unearthed Dragonstone: The tunnels around this area appear to have been excavated randomly, with many ending mere feet after they begin. After a complete exploration of the area, a character can make a DC 20 Knowledge (architecture and engineering) check. A success determines that all the diggings point to a central location: The various tunnels are attempts to find the easiest route through veins of soft sandstone to the central chamber. This area has been sealed off behind a wall of sandstone, but a successful DC 25 Search check reveals the blockage. Pushing through to the chamber takes appropriate magic or 8 hours of digging by four characters.

The sandstone cavern has been excavated around a massive slab of black onyx. Across the slab's face gleam the twisting silver lines of a symbol resembling a dragonmark, reflecting any moonlight or sunlight that shines down a narrow shaft punched through the rock above.

3. Shoreline Ruins: These battlements once formed the overland gateway to the ancient port town, but nearly



thirty centuries of erosion have left their remains well below the waterline. The ruins are accessible only at low tide, requiring a wait of 1d12 hours (possibly attracting the attention of wandering creatures) for a chance to explore. Creatures able to breathe and see underwater can explore the area even at high tide, though the rough water is murky at all times (*DMG* 93). At low tide, the area is thick with algae and seaweed, requiring DC 10 Balance checks to move.

Within the ruins, signs of recent excavation and exploration can be found (Search DC 20). Both Huge and smaller creatures (draconic agents and their dragon prophet servants) have been at work here.

With a successful DC 15 Search check, a character discovers that one slab of algae-covered rock shows less erosion than the rest of the ruins. Further investigation reveals that it has been placed here recently. Beneath the slab is a hidden chamber, but the stone requires a DC 40 Strength check to shift it (up to six characters can attempt at once). If the attempt is made while the surging tide covers the stone, the water's buoyancy grants a +5 bonus on the check.

The chamber contains a sealed trunk holding maps, notes, blank parchment, ink, pens, and four *cloaks of the manta ray*. The maps and notes speak of excavations ongoing beneath the footings of the ruined lighthouse (area 4). The dragon prophets who come here from time to time use the cloaks to enter the underwater ruins.

4. Lighthouse Footings: The crumbled foundations of a ruined lighthouse rise from the silt of the ocean floor 10 feet beneath the surging waves at low tide. A DC 25 Search or Survival check is needed to find them. The rough water is murky at all times. Any number of breaches in the ancient stone give access to the ruined foundations. In the center of the ruins, a bubble of air marks the area of a permanent *control water* effect. Below it, a passageway has been carefully excavated.

5. Prophecy Chamber: Some 50 feet below the lighthouse foundations (well belowground even when the port was a thriving city), a rough-hewn chamber has been carved from the living rock. A DC 15 Search check reveals the marks of claws and tools, signs that both dragons and humanoids have been active in the excavations here. Where the ceiling has weakened, it is supported by beams and stanchions, and sections of the walls appear to have been carefully cleaned of slime and debris.

This chamber is magically free of water, and the air, though slightly stale, is breathable on arrival. However, the air does not refresh itself. Each creature can stay here for a number of rounds equal to its Constitution score before the lack of oxygen begins to have an effect. After this time, it must hold its breath or begin to suffocate (*DMG* 304). The dragons and dragon prophets who work here use *bottles of air* to replenish themselves.

The chamber walls are engraved from top to bottom with Draconic runes. A successful DC 30 Knowledge (arcana) check confirms that this writing is notes, reflections, and meditations on the draconic Prophecy. Anyone who succeeds on a DC 25 Search check confirms that the engraving is thousands of years old. With a successful DC 20 Profession (scribe) or Knowledge (arcana) check, a character who reads Draconic can successfully copy a single page's worth of runes. Copying a page takes 1 hour, and a character can scribe a maximum of 10 pages per point of Intelligence bonus. (The chamber itself contains much more lore; this number simply represents how much the limited understanding of a single character allows him to transcribe.) Each page can fetch 100 gp from a scholar or sage with an interest in the Prophecy, but PCs attempting to sell this knowledge might find themselves targets of the Chamber or the great wyrm Qataakhast (page 120).

6. Shrine to Lhazaar: Beyond the Prophecy chamber is a smaller cavern similarly covered in Draconic runes. However, this text is a narrative: apparently a first-hand account of the preparations and departure of Lhazaar's expedition from the city that once stood above. The text speaks of challenges from the Rhiavhaar pirates and slavers who controlled the Sea of Rage, and of Lhazaar's dedication to a purpose whose meaning is not made clear. The narrative hints of a desperation underlying the dangerous journey east, and of some of the migrants in Lhazaar's flotilla fleeing devastating wars in Sarlona's western lands. In addition, the text suggests that both a dragon in human form and a rakshasa of the Lords of Dust might have accompanied Lhazaar's expedition.

The writing in this chamber can be easily copied at a rate of 1 page per hour, to a total of 100 pages' worth of information. A copy of this lore can fetch up to 10,000 gp from any Khorvairian scholar or sage but attracts the same attention from draconic agents as text copied from the Prophecy chamber.

Notes and diaries kept by the dragon prophets who have worked here hint that the engravings in both rooms date from the first century after the Lhazaar migration. The notes speak of Sarlona as being outside the draconic Prophecy, but they also tell of a group of dragons who understood how important Lhazaar's expedition was to the unfolding of the Prophecy in Khorvaire.

At the center of the cavern rests a worn sandstone pedestal. On it sits an amulet that radiates magic. At the DM's discretion, this might be a relic from Lhazaar's own life, or a magic or psionic item placed here by draconic agents for safekeeping.

WHITE WATER HARBOR ENCOUNTERS

(Check 1/hour, 8% chance)

d%	Water Encounter	EL
01–20	Sea drake (*FF* 147)	15
21–40	Dragon turtle (*MM* 88)	9
41–55	1d2 dragon eels (*MM3* 44)	11–13
56–65	1d4 seryulins (*MM3* 148)	7–11
66–75	1d4 skrags (*MM* 248)	5–9
76–100	Juvenile bronze dragon (*MM* 80)	9

d%	Land Encounter	EL
01–10	1d4 seryulins (*MM3* 148)	7–11
11–25	1d6 ambush drakes (*MM3* 8)	5–10
26–35	1d4+1 ssvaklors (*MM3* 166)	12–15
36–55	Riedran patrol (4 human fighter 2, *DMG* 117) led by 1 human ranger 8 (*DMG* 122)	9
56–75	Dragon prophet (sorcerer 6/dragon prophet 3; *MoE* 68)	9
76–100	Juvenile bronze dragon (*MM* 80)	9

SARLONA ENCOUNTERS

QATAAKHAST THE BRIGHT-EYED

"The exiles forgot their past and this place almost from the moment they stepped onto the boats, so desperate were they to burn away the horrors of what lay behind them. Or perhaps they sensed the greatness of their future and sought to leave space for that in the memory-yet-to-come of their race. Few care to know these things now, but they remain with me. If you have time to listen, I have time to speak . . ."

—Qataakhast the Bright-Eyed

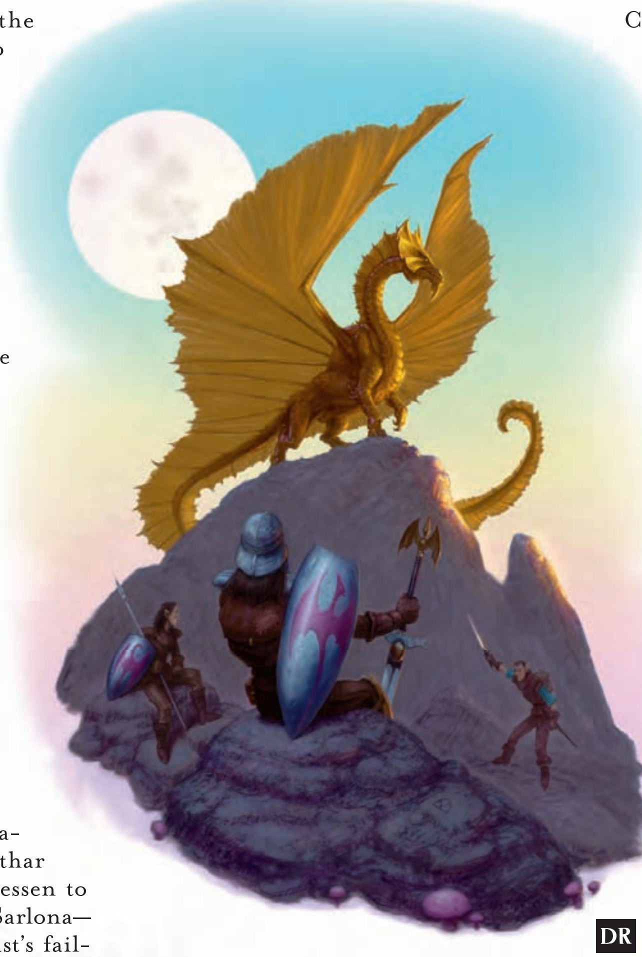
In the glowing steppes and harsh desert wastes of Syrkarn, tales are told of an ageless dragon whose molten gaze has seen this land's fall and rise. He is Qataakhast the Bright-Eyed, a great brass wyrm who can be sighted in the sands and empty grasslands from the central Plains of Itzaina to the sea.

Qataakhast is the keeper of many secrets, but the one he holds closest is known only to him and his apprentice Rumura. Though the dragons of Argonnessen had always been cognizant of the role human history would one day play in the Prophecy, few could have foretold how far that history would advance as a result of a single fateful sea voyage. Three thousand years ago, a ragtag flotilla of ships set out from the shores of Rhiavhaar, bound for an unknown land across the Sea of Rage. The captain of this expedition was Lhazaar. Qataakhast was there to watch her go.

As a young adult, Qataakhast and his mate Vyssilthar (see page 99) left Argonnessen to take up a life of exile in Sarlona—punishment for Qataakhast's failure at a mission of which he has not spoken in all the time since. When the Lhazaar expedition set sail, Vyssilthar felt compelled to accompany it in half-elf form. Qataakhast stayed behind, bound to complete his penance alone.

Before her departure, Vyssilthar had spent long years studying the draconic Prophecy. When Lhazaar's port city was abandoned in the Sundering, Qataakhast returned there to record his mate's work and his own memories of the expedition, even as he kept watch on the open sea in the hope that she might someday return. However, as Riedra established its dominion over Rhiavhaar, Qataakhast was forced to flee for the freedom of Syrkarn, where he remains today. (Qataakhast's former lair and the caverns where he recorded his impressions are part of White Water Harbor, page 117.)

Though his former life and calling are some thirty centuries behind him, Qataakhast has lost none of the nobility and sense of purpose that mark many of the great wyrms of Argonnessen. Today, he spends much of his time traveling across his adopted homeland, forcing lesser rogue dragons to respect the settlements of human and eneko (Syrkarn's civilized "mongrel ogre" tribes). On rare occasions, Qataakhast has unleashed his full fury to keep local rogues in line. For most, a single demonstration is all that's needed.



Qataakhast the Bright-Eyed shares the knowledge of centuries

DESCRIPTION

Centuries beneath the bleaching Syrkarn sun have burnished Qataakhast's scales to an almost mirrorlike sheen. His bladed chin-horns are the length of longswords, each honed to razor sharpness by constant rubbing against the shard pile within his lair. Years of slumber on a bed of Khyber shards have left the scales of Qataakhast's underbelly limned a deep blue-black, and a faint glow seems to ripple there as he moves. The deep green of his wing-edges appears nearly pearl-black when they are unfurled, and the great wyrm's eyes burn with the light of a Syrkarn dawn.

Like all brass dragons, Qataakhast loves the heat, and he often basks in the open sand and empty grasslands of his adopted home. However, because of his imposing physical presence, the great wyrm makes a point of flying only at night if possible. Qataakhast soars with a speed and grace that defy his massive size, and when his gleaming scales catch the dawn's light, they flare like a beacon that can be seen for miles. The eneko nomads of the plains consider it good luck to catch sight of this "dragonlight."

Though he conveys the majesty of distant Argonnessen in his every word, the great wyrm retains the verbosity and playful acquisitiveness common among his kind. He is great lover of gifts, no matter how trifling, and to those who offer some trinket and the necessary respect, Qataakhast will happily speak for days on end. Those who come to him with specific questions inevitably receive answers, but the great wyrm is seldom in a hurry to get to the point.

For a thousand years, Qataakhast has watched over this land, always hopeful that Vyssilthar might one day return to his side before he takes his last sight of earth and sky. Lately, however, the great dragon has become resigned to facing his end alone. The idea that his knowledge will die with him when he passes saddens Qataakhast, and so he seeks to pass on what he knows in the time that remains.

MINIONS

Over his long life, Qataakhast has known countless mortal creatures that have passed to dust in the relative blink of a dragon's eye. As he has aged, the great wyrm's benevolence toward those who seek his counsel has not lessened. However, he has grown ever more circumspect over the years, and these days counts on only a single creature for friendship and service.

The djinni Khayyada (*MM* 114) came to know Qataakhast through the dragon's *summon djinni* ability. She appreciates that Qataakhast summons her only for noble purpose or from dire need, and the great wyrm and the ageless genie have developed a close relationship over the years. With her *wind walk* and *plane shift* abilities, Khayyada often undertakes far-ranging errands for Qataakhast, including numerous intelligence-gathering expeditions to Riedra and at least one recent mission to Argonnessen itself. When summoned, Khayyada reacts immediately to any threat against her master, defending Qataakhast with her life.

ALLIES AND ENEMIES

Qataakhast's apprentice and assistant is Rumura, an aspiring dragon sage (male adult gold dragon loremaster 6). The great wyrm took the gold under his wing some five decades earlier. Like Qataakhast, Rumura was exiled to Sarlona for crimes he does not discuss. However, unlike his mentor, the gold dragon aspires to return to Argonnessen one day and sees Qataakhast's unique knowledge and legacy as his eventual ticket home.

Because Qataakhast does not have the alternate form ability, Rumura is also the great wyrm's agent among the peoples of Sarlona. In open country, the dragon often travels in the form of a gold-white wolf, taking on human form in civilized centers and on intelligence-gathering missions for his master. Though Qataakhast does not know it, Rumura resents the tedious questions of strangers who interfere with his own attempts to codify the great wyrm's lore. Thus, the gold spends much of his time deflecting the attention of those who would seek out the Bright-Eyed.

As one of the most powerful dragons in Sarlona, Qataakhast is under the constant scrutiny of Thousand Eyes agents in Syrkarn. Kumesha is one such operative (male Chosen nomad^{EPH} 10/fist of Dal Quor^{SoS} 5) whose missions have taken him from the Syrkarn coast to the Riedran frontier and back again. As a fist of Dal Quor, Kumesha enjoys great latitude in setting the scope of his assignments, and his nominal work monitoring the movements of dissidents in Syrkarn has taken a back seat to close observation of Qataakhast for several years. Rumors suggest that Kumesha might have even secretly defended Qataakhast against plots of the Gornatha (page 124), but if so, the Riedran's motivations remain unknown.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

Though Qataakhast possesses a near incomprehensible amount of knowledge, the great wyrm remains effectively cut off from much of the world around him. During his three-thousand-year exile in Syrkarn, events such as the Last War, the emergence of the Silver Flame, the arrival of the kalashtar in Adar, and the rise of the Blood of Vol have all occurred at the periphery of Qataakhast's understanding. What he does know might still have incalculable value for PCs caught up in the maelstrom of intrigue that is Eberron, even if Qataakhast himself does not understand the information's significance.

Fact-Finding Mission: One of the Khorvairian universities believes that a rogue dragon in Syrkarn is sitting on a first-hand account of the Lhazaar expedition, and enlists the PCs to "liberate" this priceless lore. After they make contact with the benevolent Qataakhast, the PCs learn that their patrons actually want the dragon and his knowledge destroyed. The party is merely a dupe in a much larger scheme.

Dragon Uprising: The PCs defend Qataakhast when against a group of rogue Syrkarn dragons who rise up against this self-styled protector of the steppes. However, the party's attempts to aid the great wyrm are complicated by his apparent lack of concern for his own life. Having accepted that he will not see Vyssilthar again before the end, this legendary dragon believes that his time on Eberron is done.

QATAAKHAST THE BRIGHT-EYED CR 23

Male great wyrm brass dragon
NG Gargantuan dragon (fire)
Init +4; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., keen senses; Listen +45, Spot +5
Aura frightful presence (360 ft., DC 33)
Languages Common, Draconic, Riedran

AC 42, touch 6, flat-footed 42
(–4 size, +36 natural)
hp 536 (37 HD); **DR** 20/magic
Immune fire, sleep, paralysis
SR 30
Fort +28, **Ref** +20, **Will** +25
Weakness vulnerability to cold

Speed 70 ft. (14 squares), burrow 40 ft., fly 270 ft. (average); Flyby Attack, Hover, Wingover
Melee bite +47 (4d6+13) and
2 claws +45 each (2d8+6) and
2 wings +44 each (2d6+6) and
tail slap +44 (2d8+19)
Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft. (20 ft. with bite)

Base Atk +37; **Grp** +62
Atk Options Blind-Fight, Cleave, magic strike
Special Actions breath weapon, crush 4d6+19 (DC 36), tail sweep (30 ft., Small or smaller, 2d6+19, DC 40 36 half)
Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 19th):
9th (4/day)—*foresight, Mordenkainen's disjunction* (DC 25)
8th (6/day)—*mass charm monster* (DC 23), *moment of prescience, prismatic wall* (DC 23)
7th (6/day)—*animate breath*$^{\text{Dr}}$, *greater stunning breath*$^{\text{Dr}}$, *Mordenkainen's magnificent mansion*
6th (6/day)—*disintegrate* (DC 21), *greater dispel magic, globe of invulnerability*
5th (7/day)—*dream, permanency, telekinesis, greater wings of air*$^{\text{Dr}}$
4th (7/day)—*dispelling breath*$^{\text{Dr}}$, *greater invisibility, stone shape, stunning breath*$^{\text{Dr}}$ (DC 36)
3rd (7/day)—*daylight, major image* (DC 18), *tongues, water breathing*
2nd (7/day)—*detect thoughts* (DC 17), *fox's cunning, eagle's splendor, magic mouth, misdirection*
1st (8/day)—*alarm, breath flare*$^{\text{Dr}}$, *comprehend languages, expeditious retreat, unseen servant*
0 (6/day)—*arcane mark, detect magic, detect poison, flare* (DC 15), *mage hand, mending, message, read magic, resistance*

Note: If you don't have *Draconomicon*, give Qataakhast *greater teleport* and *spell turning* at 7th level, *break enchantment* at 5th, *enervation* and *dimension door* at 4th, and *shield* at 1st.

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 19th):
1/day—*suggestion* (DC 18), *control winds, control weather, summon djinni*
3/day—*endure elements*
At will—*speak with animals*

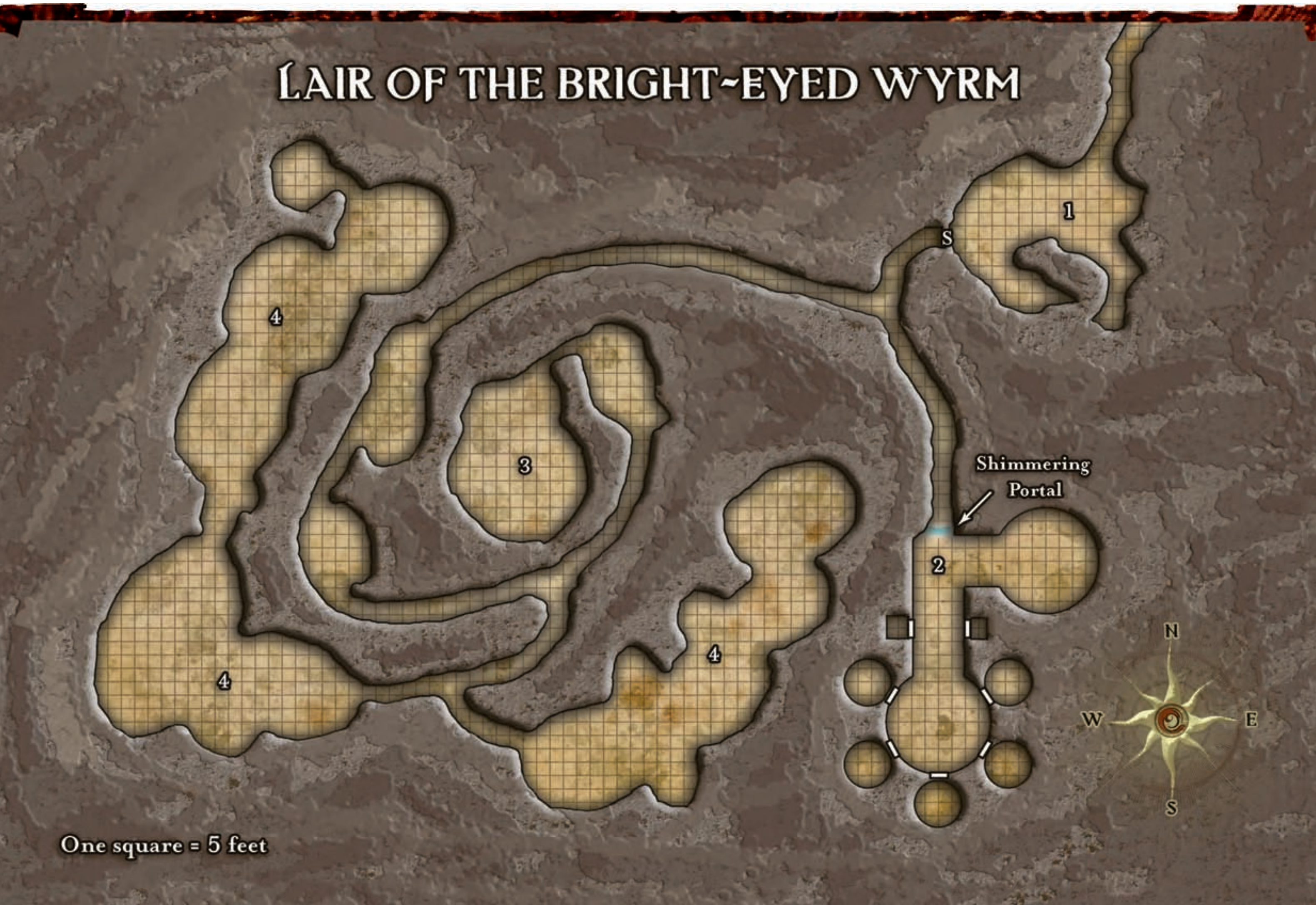
Abilities Str 37, Dex 10, Con 27, Int 20, Wis 21, Cha 20
Feats Blind-Fight, Cleave, Flyby Attack, Heighten Breath$^{\text{Dr}}$, Hover, Improved Initiative, Improved Maneuverability$^{\text{Dr}}$ (2), Improved Speed$^{\text{Dr}}$, Multiattack, Weapon Focus (bite), Weapon Focus (claw), Wingover
Skills Concentration +48, Diplomacy +49, Gather Information +9, Hide –12, Intimidate +45, Jump +29, Knowledge (history) +45, Knowledge (local) +45, Knowledge (nature) +47, Listen +45, Search +45, Sense Motive +45 , Spot +45, Survival +45 (+47 following tracks)

Magic Strike (Ex) Qataakhast's natural attacks are treated as magic weapons for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Breath Weapon (Su) 60-ft. cone, once every 1d4 rounds, sleep for 1d6+12 rounds, Will DC 36; or 120-ft. line, once every 1d4 rounds, 12d6 fire, Reflex DC 36 half.

Heighten Breath Qataakhast can increase the save DC of his breath weapon by up to +8. For each point by which he increases the save DC, add 1 to the number of rounds he must wait to use his breath weapon again.

Summon Djinni (Sp) As the *summon monster* spell, except that it summons one djinni. This ability is the equivalent of a 7th-level spell.



LAIR OF THE BRIGHT-EYED WYRM

In the face of a vast sandstone bluff, a wide cave mouth marks the entrance to Qataakhast's lair. The area has a reputation among local Syrks as a home to yuan-ti, but the band of the serpent-folk that might have once dwelled here was gone long before the great wyrm's arrival. He allows the rumors to continue by ensuring that Rumura spreads them anew on his travels, in hopes of maintaining his privacy. Qataakhast is always happy to meet those who seek him out, but he does not wish his formidable size and frightful presence to inadvertently alarm the tribes that call the adjacent grasslands home.

Outside the guest chambers, much of the interior of Qataakhast's lair was excavated with *disintegrate*, and its walls are unnaturally smooth. The corridors and chambers are rounded to better fit the great wyrm's enormous bulk; smaller creatures must walk single file along the curved stone floors. Individual chambers have gently sloping floors and domed ceilings.

Keyed Locations

The following features correspond to numbered areas on the map.

1. Empty Cave: This deserted cavern hides the entrance proper to Qataakhast's lair. The dragon has intentionally left signs of habitation and a scattering of yuan-ti relics in the cave. However, a successful DC 20 Search check indicates that nothing has been touched in decades. It also reveals the tracks of a Gargantuan creature scarring a well-trodden path through the cave toward the back wall.

That back wall is a carefully constructed secret door (Search DC 30) that radiates faint abjuration, conjuration, and divination magic. The door opens automatically at Qataakhast's approach but can be otherwise breached only by creatures bearing gifts. Near the door is a wide ledge with signs that numerous objects have been placed upon it. Once each creature in the cavern sets a gift for Qataakhast on the ledge, the door swings wide to allow them to pass. Gifts need not have any real worth but be of some value to the owner or be brought specifically as a gift (as determined by a permanent *detect thoughts* effect active in the area). Once the door is open, petitioners can enter, along with their gifts.

2. Guest Chambers: Guests of Qataakhast stay here. Through an arch at the end of a rough stone passageway, a shimmering portal reveals a high-ceilinged great hall. This wing of the cavern does not actually exist in Sarlona. Rather, the portal opens up into the extradimensional space of a *Mordenkainen's magnificent mansion* of Qataakhast's own design. The dragon casts the spell daily while in the lair, even if he has no guests in residence. If he is not here to cast the spell, the passageway ends in blank stone.

The palatial interior has been appointed in the finest Syrk style. Across all the pale sandstone walls, tapestries weave a riot of color. Thick woven mats cover the floors of the great hall, dining hall, and lounge. Within five circular guest chambers, piles of colorful pillows do double duty as seats or beds. In the domed dining hall, a dozen comfortable chairs surround a large marble table where guests can partake of delicious food and drink at any time. Sweet-scented braziers burn constantly in all areas, and the mansion's magical servants are at guests' beck and call.

3. Qataakhast's Hoard: The great wyrm's hoard chamber is his residence within the lair, though when speaking with guests, he prefers to sprawl beneath the open sky. Qataakhast's hoard is a remarkable mix of the valuable and the mundane, featuring historical treasures collected over the dragon's long life, as well as an amazing assortment of trinkets and gifts he has amassed from visitors, supplicants, and his own travels.

Coinage and riches dating back to the rule of the sorcerer-kings can be found here, as can worthless jewelry of brass and stone, carved tokens of the eneko nomads, racks of antlers and cured pelts, moldering cloth, ancient books of no particular value, and more. However, the bulk of the dragon's treasure pile is a veritable mountain of Khyber dragonshard fragments. Like his Argonnessen kin, Qataakhast covets these physical pieces of the Prophecy. Many of the Khyber shards he has collected over the space of thirty centuries have been worn down to pebble-sized fragments that endlessly shift beneath the dragon's enormous bulk.

4. Chambers of Reflection: In this extended reach of smooth-walled caverns, three thousand years of personal memoir have been carefully inscribed in Draconic. The lore here represents an almost complete (if somewhat one-sided) history of Rhiavhaar for a millennium before the Sundering, and of Syrkarn in all the years since. The points that Qataakhast has chosen to record are sometimes obscure, but anyone familiar with dragons' interpretation of the Prophecy can see how the great wyrm has drawn lines between apparently random events sometimes hundreds of years apart. A character who can read Draconic receives a +1 bonus on a single Knowledge (history), Knowledge (local [Sarlona]), or bardic knowledge check for every hour spent in study here (maximum +10).

At the end of the northern branch of the passageway lies a small chamber with blank walls. Qataakhast has long intended to fill this space with his account of Vyssilthar's return.

GORNATH THE MADWYRM

"I saw the Madwyrm once. It was enough."

—Lord Sulatesh of the Burning Blade,
commander of Kintam Sulat

For those who study it, the sparse history of dragons in Sarlona is punctuated by regular tales of rogues driven mad by the pursuit of psionic power. The strange energy of psionics often reacts poorly with the arcane potential of the children of Siberys. However, Sarlona is a land steeped in psionics, from the ancient ruins of the yuan-ti to the *hanbalani altas* that focus and shape the collective mind-power of the people of Riedra. A small number of rogue dragons are drawn to the arts of the mind—and to the destructive madness that inevitably results.

Gornath is a native Sarlonan, born in the Frostblade foothills of the Tashana Tundra. From his lair on the Tundra–Riedra frontier, he ranges through virtually all the lands of Sarlona except central Riedra (which holds the great cities of the Inspired) and eastern Syrkarn (where lairs Qataakhast, self-styled guardian of that land). From Ohr Kaluun to Adar, Gornath has begun to unite other rogue dragons and isolated clans of persecuted yuan-ti in the name of his own twisted version of draconic destiny. In his madness, he sees psionics as the next stage of draconic evolution, and he is the paragon and path through which that evolution will unfold.

DESCRIPTION

Gornath is a young adult red dragon, though he is barely recognizable as such. Endless skirmishes with the Harmonious Shield have combined with the ravaging effect of his pursuit of psionic power to twist his form. His body is deeply scarred, the dull red of his gnarled scales flecked with black.

His jet-black wings and neck frill are shredded, trailing flayed skin that creates a distinctive hiss as he flies. Each of his frill-spikes has been set with a skull (mostly yuan-ti and human), and a heavy mithral chain strung with yuan-ti and half-giant skulls adorns his throat. The teeth of his reeking maw are jagged stumps, stained the same red-black as his tongue and his unblinking eyes.

Even more disturbing than Gornath's physical appearance is his reputation in battle. The Madwyrm attacks with no provocation or thought to his own safety, and is as likely to decimate ranks of weaker creatures as he is to take on foes stronger than himself. He typically leads off with a maximized breath weapon attack, often after casting *invisibility* to get into optimal position. Gornath otherwise eschews spellcasting in battle with lesser creatures, but he uses his potent psionic powers against the weak-willed.

MINIONS

The Madwyrm's minions rarely last long enough to be noteworthy, and Gornath has run through countless yuan-ti lieutenants and acolytes over his lifetime. One exception is Zrayanu (N male yuan-ti pureblood egoist$^{\text{EPH}}$ 10), the cunning leader of a sect that has served Gornath favorably for nearly ten years. When Zrayanu's predecessor underestimated the dragon's need for obedience, his skull was quickly added to Gornath's collection. Zrayanu does not intend to make the same mistake, and he has instilled in his followers a maniacal devotion to the Madwyrm.

To his yuan-ti thralls, Gornath has become the essence of Syrkarn, the mystical force rumored to lie sleeping beneath the ruined yuan-ti city of Sustrai Mor. Over the past ten years, a number of yuan-ti clans and more than a few rogue dragons have joined this de facto cult. This movement is a source of concern to scholars in Sarlona and Khorvaire alike, who fear that the ruins of Sustrai Mor in fact hold a bound rakshasa rajah.

The yuan-ti cultists have begun to use the protective influence of the rogue dragons to spread beyond their native Syrkarn, reportedly pushing across the Andnemun desert frontier and into Borunan. Seeking to follow the Madwyrm's example, the rogues call themselves the Gornatha and study the psionic mysteries with the yuan-ti's aid. As the Madwyrm's following grows, so does his power.

In addition to a shifting entourage of yuan-ti and other dragons, Gornath has the fealty of four phrenic manticores (*EPH* 205) that guard his lair.

ALLIES AND ENEMIES

The rogue dragons who pay fealty to Gornath are fair-weather allies at best. The most notorious are Azhnylix, a juvenile bronze dragon of Ohr Kaluun, and the sibling adult white dragons Basnetix and Basnetar, who control a vast swath of territory in the northernmost reaches of the Tundra. All make full use of their association with the Madwyrm, if only because as long as his cult continues to rise, Riedra focuses its attention on him rather than on them.

Despite his relatively young age, Gornath is one of the most notorious rogue dragons of the past century. The Harmonious Shield typically takes an approach of careful observation and quiet containment when dealing with the dragons of Sarlona, but Gornath is an exception. From Adar to the Frostblade frontier, Riedran units have standing orders to destroy the dragon on sight. At the highest levels of Harmonious Shield command, rumors suggest that the Conclave of Siberys has actually asked the Inspired to slay the Madwyrm.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

Any encounter between a PC party and Gornath has little potential for anything but bloodshed. The Madwyrm is hedonistic, merciless, and dangerously insane.

Treasure Hunt: The PCs have come to Sarlona seeking a psionic artifact of great power. However, they discover too late that the Madwyrm covets this same relic, and that he will stop at nothing to get it.

Friends of My Enemies: The PCs come to the aid of a good dragon under attack by a flight of evil rogues. However, when it is revealed that the good dragon is a cultist of the Madwyrm, the party must decide whether to throw in with the evil dragons, who wish to see Gornath's power checked.

Prophecy Found: A fragment of the twisted exegesis in Gornath's lair makes its way to Argonnessen, where a group of dragon prophets determines it is a missing piece of Prophetic lore. The PCs are charged with infiltrating a yuan-ti cult to gain access to the Madwyrm's lair.

Gornath the Madwyrm CR 17

Male young adult red dragon wilder$^{\text{EPH}}$ 9
CE Huge dragon (fire)
Init +4; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., keen senses; Listen +29, Spot +29
Aura frightful presence (150 ft., DC 27)
Languages Draconic

AC 30, touch 10, flat-footed 30; elude touch (2 size, +4 armor, +18 natural)
hp 323 (28 HD); **DR** 5/magic
Immune fire, sleep, paralysis
SR 19
Fort +21, **Ref** +15, **Will** +19; surging euphoria +1
Weakness vulnerability to cold

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares), fly 150 ft. (poor)
Melee bite +32 (2d8+10) and
  2 claws +30 each (2d6+5) and
  2 wings +29 each (1d8+5) and
  tail slap +29 (2d6+15)
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (15 ft. with bite)
Base Atk +23; **Grp** +41
Atk Options Ghost Attack, Wounding Attack, magic strike, surging euphoria +1, wild surge +3
Special Actions breath weapon, crush 2d8+15 (DC 2927)
Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 5th):
  2nd (5/day)—*invisibility, touch of idiocy* (+31 melee touch)
  1st (7/day)—*charm person* (DC 14), *mage armor*†, *ray of enfeeblement* (+21 ranged touch), *shocking grasp* (+31 melee touch, DC 14)
  0 (6/day)—*acid splash* (DC 13), *detect magic, daze* (DC 13), *resistance, read magic, touch of fatigue* (+31 melee touch, DC 13)
  † Already cast
Power Points/Day: 85; **Wilder Powers Known** (ML 9th):
  4th—*power leech* (DC 17)
  3rd—*energy retort* (DC 16), *psionic blast* (DC 16)
  2nd—*ego whip* (DC 15)
  1st—*demoralize* (DC 14), *detect psionics*
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th):
  5/day—*locate object*

Abilities Str 31, Dex 10, Con 22, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 16
SQ psychic enervation, volatile mind (2 power points)
Feats Alertness, Expanded Knowledge (psionic blast). Maximize Breath$^{\text{Dr}}$, Multiattack, Ghost Attack$^{\text{EPH}}$, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Psionic Meditation$^{\text{EPH}}$, Weapon Focus (bite), Weapon Focus (claw), Wounding Attack$^{\text{EPH}}$
Skills Concentration +36, Hide –8, Intimidate +33, Jump +23, Knowledge (arcana) +24, Knowledge (psionics) +33, Listen +33, Spot +33, Use Magic Device +24, Use Psionic Device +13

Magic Strike (Ex) Gornath's natural attacks are treated as magic weapons for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Breath Weapon (Su) 50-ft. cone, once every 1d4 rounds, 10d10 fire, Reflex DC 30 half.

Maximize Breath Gornath can use his breath weapon as a full-round action to deal maximum damage (100 points), but doing so adds 3 to the number of rounds he must wait to use his breath weapon again.

THE BLACK VAULT

In the Frostblade Mountains along the Tundra–Maleeri frontier, the remains of a tall tower jut up from the sheer face of fractured black cliffs. The tower's round walls appear to have once been unbroken stone, melded with the mountain face as if they had been pushed up from the rock itself.

The tower marks the entrance to Gornath's lair, a descending expanse of caverns and chambers hewn from the rock. The yuan-ti cultists named these ruins the Black Vault. Whoever built the tower and the complex beneath it did so in a past lost even to memory. However, Gornath has long since made this place his own, and every room and chamber now reflects the dragon's avarice and madness.

The walls and ceilings of the complex have been repeatedly blasted by dragonfire. Coins and gems are strewn along every corridor, often fused into pools of expensive slag. Across the soot-caked stones, Gornath scribes long, rambling manifestos in Draconic, detailing his own twisted version of the history and destiny of his race. When what he wrote a day or a year before no longer suits him, he blasts it from existence and begins again.

Both Gornath and the yuan-ti have explored the complex to its lowest level, including the mysterious dead-end corridor found there. However, what neither the dragon nor his minions know is that this place was a shulassakar outpost in the dying days of the Age of Demons. During that conflict, it was the site of a fearsome battle between the minions of dragon and fiend—and a terror has remained trapped here ever since.

Deadly Guardians

Characters traveling through the mountains can make a DC 30 Spot check to note shadowy creatures soaring high overhead. Four phrenic manticores serve Gornath as bodyguards. When the dragon is in residence, all four take up perches in the crags above the ruined tower, attacking trespassers on sight. When the Madwyrm is abroad, two manticores travel at his side while the other two remain behind to deal with unwelcome visitors.

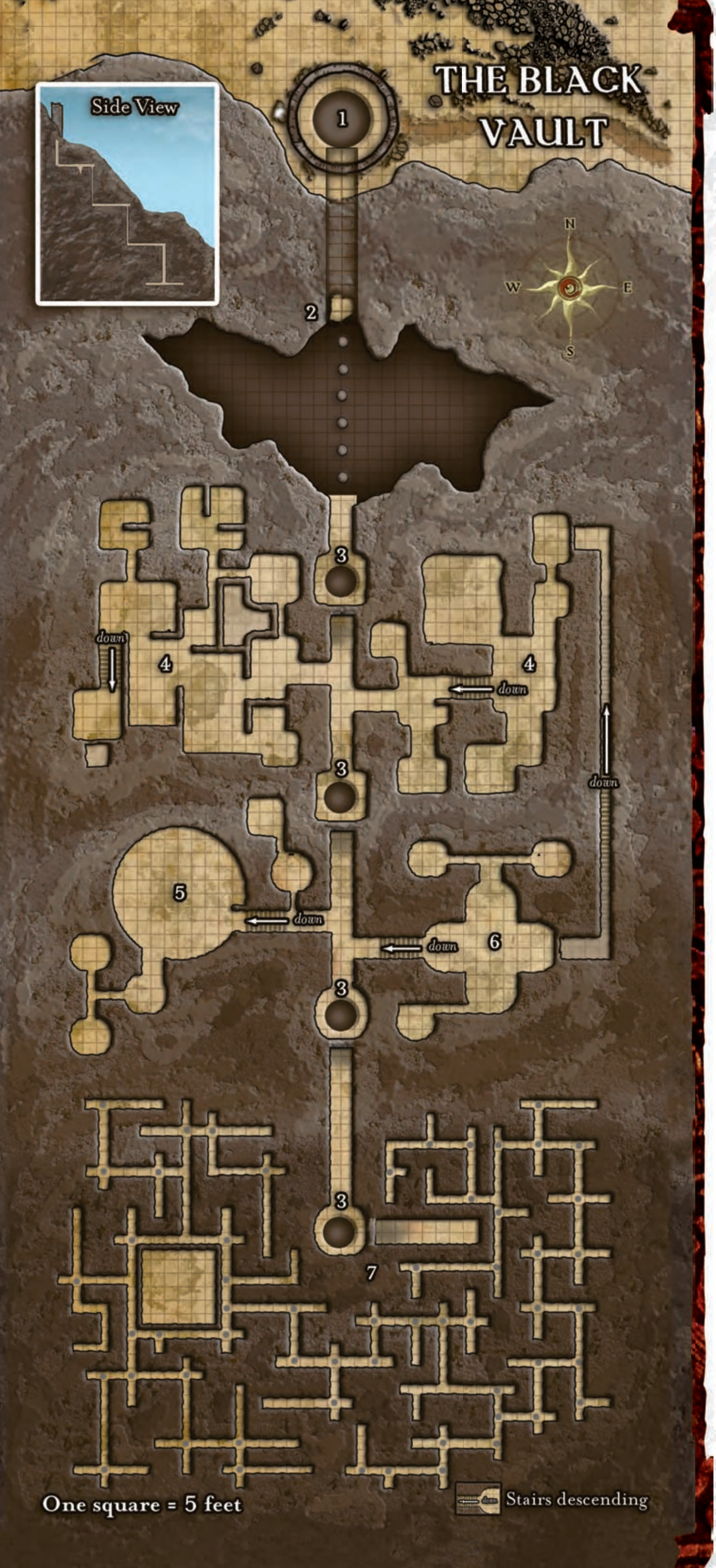
Keyed Locations

The following features correspond to numbered areas on the map.

1. The Tower: The shattered tower rises like a spike from the steep slope of the mountainside. Ascending the cliff face requires Climb checks (DC 20 along the narrow switchback trail the yuan-ti have cut into the rock, DC 30 elsewhere). The 40-foot-wide tower is smooth stone from its slanted base to the top of its shattered walls, and it gleams with an obsidian sheen. The walls climb some 60 feet before they fracture, sheared off to points like jagged teeth.

The yuan-ti trail passes through an irregular arch cut in the tower's base. Gornath and his dragon minions enter and leave through the tower's open top. The interior is empty. No features, no upper floors, no fallen rubble offers any hint as to its original purpose. Around the inside base of the wall, a 3-foot-wide lip of stone circles the edge of a pit plunging into darkness. The walls of the pit have been gouged by the claws of climbing dragons, making descent relatively easy (Climb DC 15). After 60 feet, the pit opens up into a worked stone passageway leading away to the southeast.

2. Empty Bridge: A deep chasm is bisected by a series of white marble discs floating in midair. The 5-foot-wide discs are set 10 feet apart, but anyone investigating the edge of the chasm can note that whatever magical force holds the discs up also connects them with an invisible bridge that seems to run to the chasm's far edge.



A successful DC 20 Spellcraft check reveals that strong conjuration magic fills this area; a result of 25 or more on the check determines that the aura fluctuates in a strange way. After countless centuries, the magical force has begun to fail. Creatures crossing the bridge must make DC 15 Balance checks every 10 feet in the open space between discs (jumping from disc to disc avoids any check). On a failed check, the faltering force gives way, pitching the traveler 80 feet to the chasm floor. A DC 25 Reflex save allows a creature to catch the edge of a disc, though a DC 20 Climb check is necessary to clamber back on.

Gornath and his draconic allies simply fly across the open space, but the dark floor of the rift is littered with the bodies of yuan-ti who were not light-footed enough to successfully make the crossing.

3. Empty Elevators: A 10-foot-wide hole in the floor of this high arched chamber drops 100 feet down a black stone shaft into an identical chamber below. Force-effect elevators in all these shafts once carried shulassakar between levels, but the magic here has long since faded. Gornath can easily climb up and down by squeezing through the shaft. The yuan-ti use the deep gouges of the dragon's claws as handholds (Climb DC 15).

4. Yuan-Ti Encampment: The main complex of the ruins has become a semipermanent camp for the yuan-ti sect led by Zrayanu. Between forty and one hundred yuan-ti lair here, depending on whether Gornath is in residence or not. A massive firepit fills a central great chamber, with various living quarters, kitchens, and shrines splitting off from there.

Zrayanu's chambers are set above the main encampment atop a wide obsidian staircase. In a secret chamber beyond it, the yuan-ti leader keeps a choice selection of Gornath's treasure. The dragon's insanity prevents him from properly keeping track of his hoard, and Zrayanu has been stealthily pilfering from it for some time, even before he took over from his unfortunate predecessor.

5. Flame Bath: A flight of stairs leads down to a room whose floor is slick with oily ash—a flame bath chamber of Gornath's own design. A 3-foot-wide chimney at the apex of the ceiling leads up to the open mountainside (Climb DC 20 to ascend the chimney; Climb DC 30 to descend the cliffs outside). On each wall, fixed decanters of oil (variant *decanters of endless water*) pour out geysers of lamp oil on the dragon's command. When set alight, the oil bursts into an inferno that deals 10d6 points of fire damage to everything in the area. A scattering of charred bones within the ash hints that Gornath is less than cautious about which of his allies or minions he chooses to bathe with.

6. Hoard Chamber: Gornath is consumed by a thirst for psionic power, and his hoard reflects that dark passion. Though coins, gems, and magic items can all be found here, the bulk of his hoard consists of spent psicrystals, fragments of deep crystal, and psionic weapons and relics. Gornath's treasure pile appears exceedingly large for a dragon of his age, but close examination reveals most of it to be worthless crystal and stones that the dragon believes to have some sort of psionic resonance.

Gornath is unaware of the secret door in the far wall of the chamber. The dangerously steep staircase beyond (*DMG* 63) connects two ancient guardrooms that contain magic weapons, armor, or other treasure (DM's choice). The secret door at the top of the stairs opens up into an unused chamber in the yuan-ti section of the complex.

Unlike many of the rogue dragons of Sarlona and Argonnessen, Gornath keeps no dragonshards in his lair. He claims that even the Khyber shards found in Sarlona reek of an "old magic" that burns him. He particularly hates Siberys shards, exploding in deadly anger when dragons sworn to his service are found to be secretly hoarding them. Gornath has been known to seek out and destroy Riedran merchant ships carrying Siberys shards from Xen'drik to Dar Jin.

7. Rakshasa Tomb: Behind 5 feet of magically strengthened stone (hardness 16, 1,800 hp, break DC 85), a maze of passageways hides a mighty rakshasa sorcerer entombed here since the Age of Demons. The walls, ceiling, and floors of the dead-end corridor are covered in glyphs resembling dragonmarks, but their meaning cannot be discerned even with magic. Because the walls are solid, a search for secret doors reveals no hint of the passageways beyond. However, a dwarf's stonecunning ability can detect the magical strengthening of the walls in the corridor (Search DC 30).

Within the maze, 9-foot-tall statues of shulassakar stand in each intersection, requiring Medium creatures to squeeze past them. The halls are imbued with powerful magic designed to prevent anyone from seeking and rescuing the fiend. Each round, anyone in the maze must succeed on a Will save (DC 20 + 1 per previous check) or suffer an *insanity* effect as the spell. Affected creatures who would attack or flee from the caster of the spell attack or flee from the nearest statue instead. Any statue that is attacked immediately animates and responds in kind (treat as a stone golem, *MM* 136).

The maze is also filled with potent magic traps, many of which have weakened over the hundred millennia since they were cast. Such traps function erratically (activating only when disabled, producing a different magical effect than intended, and so on, at the DM's discretion). Alternatively, spell traps might have mutated into animated magical forces akin to living spells.

Formidable draconic magic binds the rakshasa behind another 5 feet of magically treated stone, but this too has begun to fail. Although the creature remains tied to this place, it is far from powerless. Since Gornath's arrival here, the fiend has been whispering to the dragon, subtly directing his madness. If its prison walls are breached, the rakshasa will have a powerful agent under its control, and an expanding cult behind which to conceal its own plots.

ADVENTURES IN SARLONA

A dragon-based campaign in Sarlona can range as widely as the types of dragons do. This section presents four adventure frameworks suitable for further development. Two of these frameworks give the DM useful shortcuts for getting an adventuring party to Sarlona in the first place, allowing players to jump straight into a Sarlonan campaign.

CHAMBER MISSION

Low-Level

The dragons of Argonnessen have no presence in Sarlona, but that does not prevent many from studying that land at a distance. One such dragon is Txako, a Chamber agent in human form who comes to the party seeking operatives for a Sarlonan mission. His terms are attractive, especially for any party with an interest in or connection to the land of the Inspired. However, the party's assignment quickly attracts unwanted attention, and a simple reconnaissance and rescue operation turns out to be more complicated than the PCs thought.

HOOKS

Any mysterious NPC the party has previously assisted or been befriended by might turn out to be the Chamber agent Txako. Alternatively, a particularly successful espionage adventure can catch Txako's attention and inspire him to seek out the PCs with his offer. Neraasi, a changeling operative of the Chamber, has gone missing in Sarlona. In addition to determining what happened to her (and bringing her back if possible), the dragons need to know what intelligence her captors might have gained about the Chamber's clandestine operations in Riedra.

Txako's terms of payment are consistent with the party's level. To sweeten the deal, however, he offers transportation beyond anything the party could normally hope to pay for: a round-trip *greater teleport,* courtesy of a Siberys heir of House Orien (60,000 gp value). Txako simply states that time is of the essence, but if his overly generous offer sparks suspicion of the dragon's motive, so much the better.

SITES

The climax of this adventure framework can easily make use of the *Heart of Io* (page 112) or the Ohr Kaluun Hoard (page 114).

ADVENTURE

1. Hiring On: Txako seeks out the party and presents his offer, playing on any favors owed him by the PCs if they have a previous relationship. His concern for his agent is genuine, but a successful DC 25 Sense Motive check indicates that the dragon knows more of Neraasi's mission than he lets on.

As they make their way to Sharn or Passage (the only places from which an Orien heir will make the Sarlona run), the PCs realize that they are being shadowed. A confrontation en route (ideally on the lightning rail or an airship) reveals the group stalking the PCs to be Riedran military, operating under deep cover in Khorvaire.

Suggested Encounters: Riedran water soldiers (*SoS* 56) with levels in monk or ranger are an effective challenge for a low-level party. The leader of such a squad might be a multiclassed ranger/monk.

2. Arrival: The PCs are teleported to the Syrkarn town of Ardhmen and must arrange for a guide to take them into Riedra. Local guides can take them as far as the frontier, but the party must contact the Dream Merchants to procure traveling papers for the land of the Inspired.

3. Eyes of Riedra: While attempting to locate Neraasi in Riedra, the PCs attract the attention of the Thousand Eyes. The party must stay one step ahead of capture, in the meantime discovering that the Riedrans have advanced knowledge of the PCs' presence and their mission.

Suggested Encounters: Low-level secret operatives of the Thousand Eyes tend to be human or changeling rogues or monks. A changeling or Chosen psion, psychic warrior, or soulknife might lead such a squad.

4. Endgame: The party discovers the captive Chamber agent, but only after rescuing her do they understand the full extent of their mission. On the Chamber's orders, Neraasi was observing a rogue Sarlonan dragon threatening the security of Riedra. However, in addition to being Chamber agents, Txako and Neraasi are operatives in a draconic cell that seeks to aid Riedran insurgents. The party has unexpectedly found itself in the middle of what might easily become a large-scale conflict. It is up to the PCs and Neraasi to shut down the rogue dragon's plot in a way that defuses the escalating tensions between the dragons and the Inspired.

Suggested Encounters: If this adventure framework uses the *Heart of Io* location, the plot can center around the rogue dragon inciting a sect of yuan-ti to militant violence. In conjunction with the Ohr Kaluun Hoard, a dragon-led sect of the Heirs of Ohr Kaluun could be the foe the Riedrans fear.

REWARDS

The party's reward should be commensurate with the PCs' level and tied to the location chosen for the final showdown. Txako's gratitude is a worthwhile bonus on top of whatever treasure the party receives, but the PCs need to consider whether the dragon's long-term goals in Sarlona match their own.

DEVELOPMENT

Getting to and from Sarlona is often as big a challenge as the adventures that await PCs in that land. With the freedom of an open-ended *greater teleport* back home, the party can seek out more challenging adventures on the mysterious continent, possibly even serving as operatives for Txako. The forces of Riedra do not take defeat lightly, however, and the party's exploits have likely made the PCs enemies within the Thousand Eyes or the Dreaming Dark itself.

SCOURGE OF THE SERPENT FOLK

Mid-Level

The yuan-ti arose in Sarlona, but adventurers who have encountered the serpent folk elsewhere might be surprised at how little they truly know of this complex and ancient race. While traveling the Sarlonan countryside, the PCs are caught up in a yuan-ti assault against an isolated settlement. Such a sight is common in the jungles of Xen'drik, but Sarlona is rarely as straightforward as it seems.

This adventure can be set in Syrkarn, the southern Tundra, or any part of Riedra not rigidly devoted to the rule of the Inspired (such Dor Maleer, Rhiavhaar, or Ohr Kaluun).

SITES

The climax of this adventure can occur at the *Heart of Io* (page 112).

ADVENTURE

1. Yuan-Ti Assault: The PCs happen to be in an isolated village when it comes under attack by a vicious and well-organized force of yuan-ti. The villagers repel the assault, presumably with the party's assistance, but at great cost—the lives of a village elder's two warrior sons.

In the aftermath, the PCs learn that this territory has become a haven for rampaging yuan-ti clans, and that the serpent folk are spreading from their original holds in the Syrkarn desert. The villagers say that recent yuan-ti raids appear to have no goal other than slaughter, and they beg the PCs to take the fight to the serpent folk.

Suggested Encounter: The yuan-ti that attack the village are a force of halfbloods under the leadership of 2–4 yuan-ti abominations.

2. Revenge Mission: While following the trail of the yuan-ti war party, the PCs are set upon by rogue dragons. Regardless of who prevails in the battle, the dragons attempt to parlay in the end, warning the PCs off their mission. If the dragons are to be believed, the PCs have been duped. The normally neutral yuan-ti attacked the village because they have allied themselves with the Cult of Io, a powerful sect of evil yuan-ti led by a blue dragon named Maazirix. The evil yuan-ti leaders worship the blue as a holy prophet, and they are gathering powerful magic in preparation for an assault on civilization. The cult is the real enemy: Defeat it, and the yuan-ti attacks will stop.

Suggested Encounters: Any dragons of a level appropriate to the PCs can be used in this encounter. The *Draconomicon* supplement provides a complete selection of dragons by type and age.

3. Cult Showdown: The PCs must infiltrate the desert stronghold of the Cult of Io, overcoming the powerful and well-organized yuan-ti who guard it. As they progress through the complex, the PCs discover the dragon's secret—an artifact dating from the Age of Demons with which he has convinced the yuan-ti of his own divine power. (If this adventure uses the *Heart* *of Io,* the magical location is that artifact.) The cultists believe that draconic power is the yuan-ti birthright and are convinced that Maazirix will lead them to their destiny. The PCs must fight their way through the yuan-ti, then face the self-styled dragon prophet in a final showdown.

Suggested Encounters: Maazirix (CE male mature adult blue dragon) can use the example blue dragon in the *Monster Manual,* augmented with levels of barbarian or fighter for a truly memorable combat. The yuan-ti are halfbloods, purebloods, and abominations under the leadership of pureblood slayers (*MM4* 184) and abomination cult leaders (*MM4* 186) who serve the blue dragon. If the final showdown takes place at the *Heart of Io,* five yuan-ti abominations have received the magical location's special ability.

REWARDS

By shattering the yuan-ti cult, the PCs earn the gratitude of the local people—a valuable commodity in a land as insular as Sarlona. As well, the PCs can help themselves to whatever magic treasures the yuan-ti have collected once the cult is vanquished, as well as the hoard of Maazirix himself.

DEVELOPMENT

Whatever its motivations, vigilante justice is anathema to those who rule in the name of the Inspired. If this adventure takes place in Riedra, the PCs might find the gratitude of the common folk tempered by the fury of local leaders and the Harmonious Shield. At the same time, the existence of a powerful artifact or magical location anywhere in Sarlona will attract attention that the PCs might not want. The Thousand Eyes, the Heirs of Ohr Kaluun, and clandestine agents of the Chamber might all take a sudden interest in the party's affairs.

WILD ZONE GAMBIT

Mid-Level

A wild zone is a region where the energy of one plane bleeds into the Material world of Eberron. More potent than the manifest zones that dot Khorvaire, the wild zones of Sarlona are places of uncontrolled planar magic that flare and fade without warning—breaches that tear at the very fabric of two worlds.

The sudden appearance of a wild zone in Riedra is momentous enough, but this particular planar breach has deposited a dragon named Hargira in the middle of a highly populated area or in the war zone of the Adar frontier. The PCs seek a way to help him return home, but Riedran forces are under orders to capture the dragon.

HOOKS

The PCs might already be in Sarlona near the site of the wild zone. Alternatively, they could have been snatched up from almost anywhere by the same planar disturbance that affected Hargira.

If your EBERRON campaign includes the planar dragons from *Draconomicon*, Hargira could be one of those unusual creatures. Alternatively, he could be an Argonnessen native who was pulled into the rift as a result of a planar experiment gone bad.

SITES

If the wild zone opens up on the Adar frontier, this adventure framework can use the War Zone Range (page 116). In this case, the silver dragon Haurungad (in his hermit form) can be the Riedran agent charged with tracking down Hargira.

ADVENTURE

1. Arrival: A wild zone opens up, depositing Hargira either in the Riedran heartland or on the Adar frontier. The PCs are caught in the middle of the situation, either as witnesses or as unwitting travelers pulled through from Khorvaire or Xen'drik.

The PCs likely try to protect Riedran or Adaran civilians caught in the deadly chaos of the zone. Seeing their altruism, Hargira appeals to them for aid. The dragon fears that his comrades (in Argonnessen or on his home plane) will assume that he has been captured by agents of the Dreaming Dark. Unless he can find his way back home, Hargira's presence might become the catalyst for a larger conflict.

Suggested Encounters: A wild zone can be an adventure in itself. Planar creatures, deadly weather effects, and a host of other hazards can appear in and around one of these locations. Large or Huge elementals might harry the party, or creatures such as snowflake oozes (*MM3* 161) and bloodfire oozes (*MM4* 18). A ferocious storm effect might take the form of a *call lightning* spell that stays active throughout the encounter, striking the PCs and their enemies at random.

2. Capture: The PCs and Hargira are pursued by Riedran forces, and the dragon is eventually captured. If Hargira is a planar dragon, his captors want to study him for whatever insights he might provide. If he hails from Argonnessen, the Inspired believe that the wild zone resulted from failed attempt to develop secret planar gateways from the land of the dragons to Riedra.

Suggested Encounters: Riedran water soldiers (*SoS* 56) are typically dispatched to deal with rogue dragons. The standard squad consists of ranger or monk regulars, led by a multiclassed ranger/monk or monk/soulknife^EPH^.

3. Rescue Mission: Hargira is taken to a Riedran military fort to await the arrival of a contingent of Inspired. Storming a Riedran tam is a challenge beyond any single party, so the PCs must devise a way to gain access to the complex. Options include stealth, diplomacy, or allowing themselves to be intentionally captured in hopes of escaping once inside.

After rescuing Hargira, the PCs must seek intelligence on the wild zone, either through espionage or by befriending Riedran agents. They discover that the energy of this particular zone has not abated; it will flare again within hours.

4. Wild Zone Escape: The wild zone reappears again but has increased in size, disgorging an army of planar horrors. The PCs and Hargira must fight their way through this horde to the center of the zone, where a gateway opens up to take the dragon home.

Foiling the plans of the Lords of Dust requires a reluctant alliance

Suggested Encounters: Creatures found in the wild zone's second appearance should offer a greater challenge than those the PCs originally faced. These monsters might include elder elementals, avatars of elemental evil (*MM4* 7), extraplanar horrors such as yugoloths, or even quori able to manifest within the planar fury of the zone.

REWARDS

If successful in their mission, the PCs gain Hargira's gratitude and a powerful future ally. If he is native to Argonnessen, the dragon might arrange for favors from draconic agents. If he is a planar dragon, Hargira might one day master the ability to return to Eberron and aid the PCs, or he could contact them through the transitive planes or the otherworldly dreamspace (*SoS* 18).

While the PCs are inside the Riedran fort, they might come across some powerful weapon or important piece of military intelligence. Such a find is incidental to the rescue mission, but might be valuable as treasure or serve as a future campaign hook.

DEVELOPMENT

Having the PCs pulled from Khorvaire to Riedra through a one-way planar breach is an easy way to kickstart a Sarlonan campaign. Once Hargira has been safely returned home, the PCs must figure out how to survive in this new land—and how to get home themselves.

Regardless of Hargira's origins, PCs aiding him earn the enmity of the Harmonious Shield and the Thousand Eyes. If they have been deposited in Sarlona by the same planar disturbance (that is, without identification, traveling papers, or any of the other necessities for travel in the lands of the Inspired), staying out of the Riedrans' clutches should be the PCs' first priority.

THE RAKSHASA'S REVENGE

High-Level

The Inspired control Riedra with a veiled fist, but the Dreaming Dark is not the only power in the land. More than a hundred thousand years ago, the wars of the Age of Demons razed this continent, and three rakshasa rajahs remain trapped beneath it to this day. A rakshasa serving the Lords of the Dust has been magically entombed in Riedra since before the Sundering. Now accidentally freed, the creature wastes no time assembling a fiendish horde and attempting to free its rajah master.

The rakshasa's plans do not sit well with Argonnessen, and word reaches the PCs that a draconic assault on the land of the Inspired is imminent. The PCs must defeat the fiend with the aid of a colony of rogue Sarlonan dragons in order to prevent the attack from Argonnessen and a response by the Dreaming Dark.

HOOKS

If the PCs already have contacts within the Chamber, they might be recruited for this all-important mission. Alternatively, if the party has previously faced off against the agents of the Lords of Dust, the adventurers could be following up legends of a rakshasa bound by the sorcerer-kings.

SITES

The lair of the party's draconic allies can make use of the Dragons' Deep (page 110).

ADVENTURE

1. A Fiend Unleashed: The site of the rakshasa's imprisonment is a vein of dark crystal unearthed by the construction of a Riedran monolith. The fiend's accidental release can be incidental to the PCs' involvement, or the party might be present to witness the dire event.

Suggested Encounters: The rakshasa has lost much of its power during his imprisonment, so this initial encounter uses the creature's base statistics (*MM* 211). The fiend knows that it cannot take on a high-level party and avoids conflict, casting defensive spells such as *bear's endurance, mage armor,* and *shield*. It then uses *invisibility* to escape, heading for the nearest population center. There, the rakshasa takes humanoid form as it recovers strength and begins to plan.

2. Rumors of War: As the PCs regroup, they learn of a dire turn of events through contacts in the Chamber, the Thousand Eyes, or one of Riedra's many dissident groups (depending on the party's allies and associates from past adventures). From Argonnessen comes word that the Conclave sees a grave threat in the rakshasa's release—not from the fiend itself, but from certain events that the Prophecy suggests will end with the release of a bound rajah. The dragons, not trusting the Inspired to recognize or acknowledge such a threat, have no intention of letting this catastrophe happen.

Already, dragon flights led by the Light of Siberys are winging their way across the Sea of Rage, and the armies of Riedra are amassing to face them. Though the draconic force is only a fraction of that which laid waste to Xen'drik, that destruction is a potent reminder of the damage such an attack might wreak. War on a scale not seen for two thousand years is coming to Sarlona, and the PCs are the only ones who can stop it.

3. Deadly Pursuit: The PCs turn their attention to determining the rakshasa's plans. With the help of ancient lore, they discover that it seeks to unleash the power of an ancient artifact, using the blood of dragons as a catalyst. The fiend is traveling to the binding place of one of Sarlona's three rajahs (Korrandar in Adar, the Syrkarn desert, or the Krertok Peninsula in the Tundra). If their ability to magically or psionically track the creature is limited, the PCs might have to seek intelligence (by theft or diplomacy) from the Thousand Eyes.

The PCs track the rakshasa deep into the Sarlonan wilderness where the artifact it seeks is buried. There, they are set upon by the fiendish minions the creature has summoned to its side. Meanwhile, the rakshasa escapes. The battle costs the party precious time but reveals the fiend's ultimate destination: an isolated colony of rogue dragons above the site where the rajah is entombed.

Suggested Encounters: At full strength (CR 24), the rakshasa is a sorcerer 7/assassin 7 (and so casts sorcerer spells as a 14th-level caster). It has little time to waste in combat, however, and leaves the PCs to its minions. The fiend expends half its spell slots on *summon monster* spells, bringing a host of fiendish creatures to its side under the leadership of a pair of fiendish tigers.

4. Reluctant Allies: By the time the PCs arrive, the rakshasa has slain a number of dragons and claimed their power for his dark rites. Driven from their lair, the enraged survivors attack the party without provocation, seeking revenge in simple bloodlust. (If this adventure takes place in Adar, these dragons are servants of the Storm Guardians, but the Guardians themselves will not enter the conflict.)

The PCs must prevent the fight from escalating as they attempt to convince the dragons of the importance of their mission. However, the ancient leader of these Sarlonan rogues has no love for Argonnessen. Diplomacy and a pledge to help avenge the fallen can set the stage for the dragons' assistance, but the PCs might need to engage in a side quest to prove their worth to the colony.

Suggested Encounters: These rogue dragons should be typical for the environment (red, blue, and brass in Syrkarn; white and silver in the Tundra; blue, bronze, and white in Adar).

5. Dragons' Lair Showdown: The final battle takes place in and around the lair of the dragon colony, with the rakshasa's fiendish minions taking on the dragons in a small-scale reproduction of the dragon—fiend wars. Against that backdrop, the PCs face off against the rakshasa itself even as it attempts to free the rajah from a hundred millennia of imprisonment.

Suggested Encounters: With access to some of its rajah lord's powerful magic, the rakshasa has summoned a combat force of zakya (*ECS* 297), ak'chazar (*MM3* 134), and naztharune rakshasas (*MM3* 136). If forced to enter melee directly, it uses damage-dealing spells with no thought to the safety of its minions. It orders one or more naztharune rakshasas to flank with it, allowing them to make sneak attacks while it prepares to use its death attack against an individual PC. The rakshasa carries a *+5 unholy dagger* that it reserves for its death attacks.

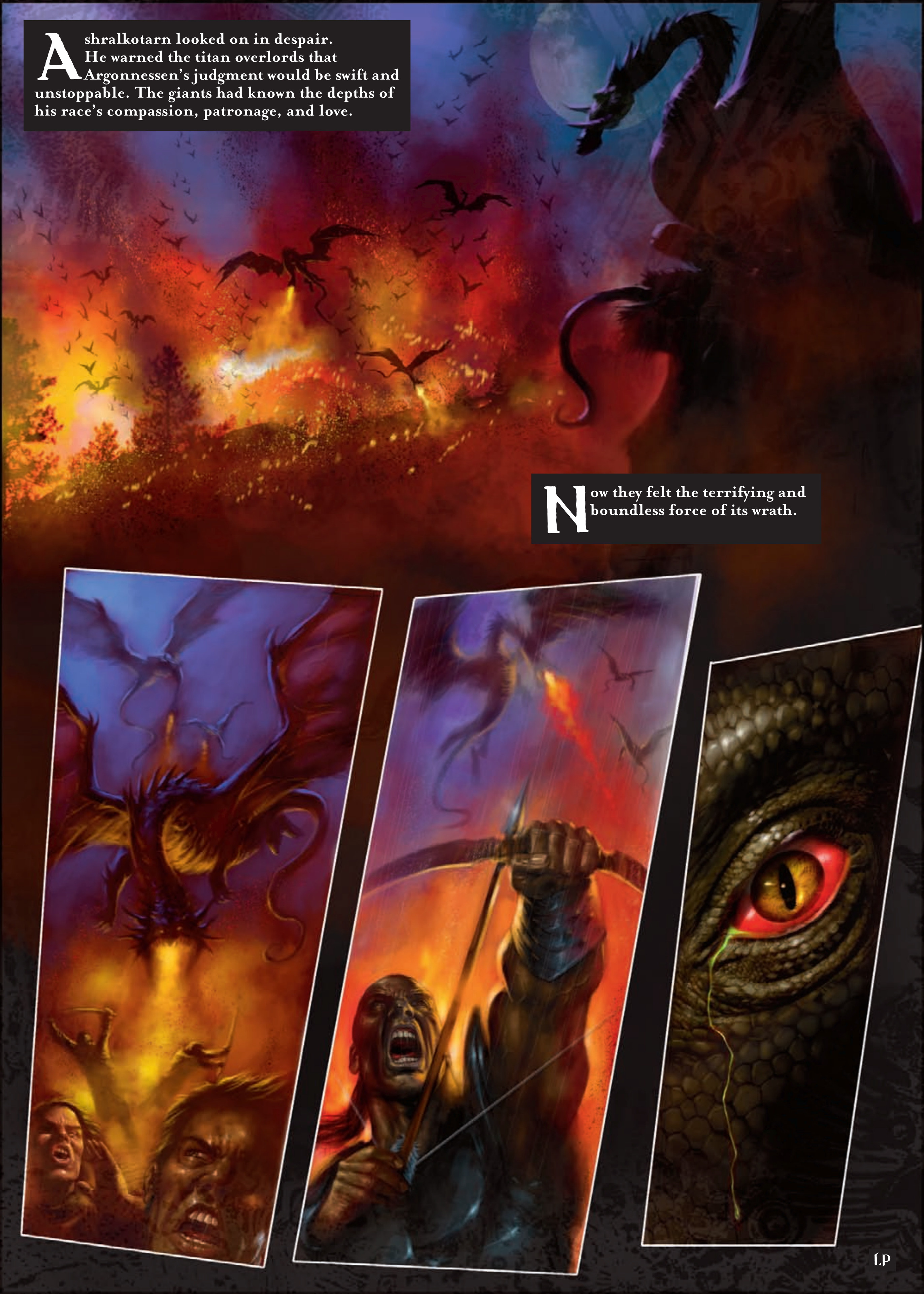
REWARDS

The PCs can claim the weapons and magic used by the rakshasa and its minions. Also, the fiend's breached tomb or the site of its bound rajah master might hold additional magic or relics from the Age of Demons.

DEVELOPMENT

The destruction of the rakshasa might come only after the fiend has managed to partially free its rajah master. Such a turn of events might require the party to form an alliance with both the Dreaming Dark and the Argonnessen dragons to prevent the release of an unspeakable evil.

Alternatively, the PCs might have to take on the task of destroying the evil artifact at the site of the bound rajah. Such a quest could see them travel to the farthest corners of Eberron, even to Argonnessen itself, for what might become an epic-level campaign.



Ashralkotarn looked on in despair. He warned the titan overlords that Argonnessen's judgment would be swift and unstoppable. The giants had known the depths of his race's compassion, patronage, and love.

Now they felt the terrifying and boundless force of its wrath.

CHAPTER FOUR

DRAGONS OF XEN'DRIK

Our kind loved this land once, and godlike we reveled in our power here. We shared our secrets with the giants. We gifted them with wonder beyond their wildest dreams. We thought to create a paradise, but fate twists cruelly. The seeds we planted among the giants grew rank and malformed, until we had no choice but to weed them out and poison their roots. Now this scornful place is nothing—a stain upon Eberron's repose, a shadowed memory of better times, a constant reminder of our arrogance. If I had led the charge against the giants on that day, I would have destroyed them to the last and broken this accursed continent to pieces just to watch it crumble into the sea. But the elders claim its purpose in the Prophecy has yet to be fulfilled . . ."

—Varistorkaan, Beacon of Siberys

The dragons' stormy romance with Xen'drik began tens of thousands of years ago and, as tumultuous affairs often do, it ended in tragedy. Sixty millennia ago the dragons gazed across the Thunder Sea at the glorious empire the giants wrought and decided to share the splendor of arcane power with them. Upon the steps of a towering white ziggurat deep in the Menechtarun desert, dragons appeared before the titan overlords and opened their eyes to the untold mysteries of magic.

A golden age unrivaled by any era in Eberron's history followed. Giant and dragon stood side by side, creating a utopia without hunger or crime. They cheated death, touched the stars, and kept the Lords of Dust securely sequestered below the ground. Under the dragons' patronage, the giants crafted sky-scraping monuments and wonders of surpassing beauty that would eventually draw the envious eye of Dal Quor. The dragons reveled in the giants' successes and then returned to Argonnessen, drunk with pride and secure in the belief that the choice to teach the giants arcane magic was a good one. Time would prove them wrong.

The utopia the giants took twenty thousand years to perfect came crashing down almost overnight. Dal Quor's vile caress brought with it an unspeakable alien doom. Nightmares erupted from the earth and sky. After years of hard-fought battle failed to stem the quori tide, the titan overlords resorted to a desperate gambit. They corrupted the dragons' beautiful gift of magic with foul blood rites and brutal sacrifices, tapping a dread power far beyond their means to control. The ultimate result of their depraved efforts was a cataclysm unlike any the world had ever before known. The baleful power they unleashed did drive off the quori—but nearly destroyed Xen'drik in the process. Whole pieces of the continent shattered and drowned in the sea. Mountains toppled, and gaping wounds the size the whole cities opened in the earth. The sun went out for a decade as blood rained from the sky in torrents.

The dragons watched it all, weeping to see their blessed gift so polluted with evil. They observed from afar as the aftermath of the giants' congress with blood

CHAMBER INROADS IN XEN'DRIK

The Chamber is mostly concerned with the activities of the dragonmarked houses and the tenuous connections between the Prophecy and Khorvaire's political dance. The majority of their agents and spy networks pervade the Five Nations and outlying territories. As Stormreach grows and the houses invest more time, energy, and assets on Xen'drik's savage shores, the Chamber naturally follows in their wake.

A network of spies and explorers based in Stormreach is managed by a young adult bronze dragon named Voldrangor the Seeker. The Seeker has his talons in many pies across the city. He counts among his agents members of the Bilge Rats, high-ranking officials in a number of dragonmarked enclaves, active members of the Wayfinder Foundation, and a slew of shady mercenaries, treasure-hunters, and scholars. News of all major events and conspiracies in the city reaches his ears. Noteworthy expeditions to the interior, and any remarkable discoveries they yield, never escape his notice.

The exploits of PCs adventuring out of Stormreach likely come to the Seeker's attention. Voldrangor could serve as a powerful patron of the party, though he usually acts through intermediaries. He might also prove a foil to their plans if their desires contradict the agenda of the Chamber.

sacrilege gave rise to plagues and curses. Their joy at the giant's once-glorious achievements turned to woe. But the worst was yet to come. As Xen'drik wheezed and gasped with sickness, the elf slaves of the giants rose up against their masters. The giants, threatened so soon after having cast the quori back to the Plane of Dreams, were wholly unprepared for another war. Faced with losing the tattered remnants of their empire to the elves, the giants decided to unleash their grotesque blood rites upon the continent once more. This choice sealed their doom.

The dragons had no tears left to shed. Their compassion and pity spent on the giants' first blunder, they were left only with their fury. The dragons did not permit the giants to repeat their cataclysmic mistake. In a display of power not seen since, the Light of Siberys and the Eyes of Chronepsis drafted thousands of other dragons into a military force beyond mortal comprehension. Draconic might descended on Xen'drik. Flights of dragons blocked out the sun, and for the first time since the epic war with the fiends, the awesome might of Argonnessen was brought to bear. In less than a week, the dragons cast down the last of the giants and expunged the titans' empire with elemental fury and epic magic. After their wrath was spent, the dragons had wreaked almost as much havoc as they intended to avert. They lamented their choice to share arcane power with the giants. To this day, that dreadful error is a stain on the memory of dragonkind, and it is one the masters of Argonnessen intend never to repeat.

Now Xen'drik is called the "forsaken continent," and older dragons still refer to the giants as "lost children." The glorious giant empire is now evidenced only by shattered ruins and broken dreams.

DRAGONS OF THE FORSAKEN

Few dragons entertain the idea of visiting Xen'drik's savage shores. Tales of the Great Fall are burned into the minds of young dragons, leaving many with the mistaken impression that the forsaken continent is a desolate wasteland of bleached giant bones and blasted earth. The thought of visiting this reminder of their race's greatest disgrace remains repugnant.

Only two paths lead dragons to Xen'drik today—duty and dishonor. Since the rise of the Inspired threat in Sarlona, the Eyes of Chronepsis are no longer willing to exile criminal dragons into the waiting arms of the quori. Xen'drik is now the nesting ground for castoffs, malcontents, and criminals; most dragons found there are rogues. The majority are evil or neutral delinquents who were banished to the forsaken continent by mandate of the Eyes.

Other dragons are stationed in Xen'drik to patrol the crumbled ruins and to ensure that the secrets of the giants' dread blood rites remain forever lost. These guardians are called Watchers, and the title is often passed down among members of the oldest dragon families. Ten special posts were created after the Great Fall, one for each color of dragon. Originally these posts were highly sought after, serving as springboards into powerful positions among the Light of Siberys and the Eyes of Chronepsis. As the millennia wore on and the giants continued to pose no credible threat, the honor associated with these posts eroded. Now, being chosen as a Watcher is viewed by many dragons as little better than a sentence of exile. On occasion, the posts are assigned to troublesome dragons to remove them from Argonnessen for a time.

There is one reason beyond exile and guardianship for dragons to end up in Xen'drik. Although the Vast serves as a proving ground for young dragons and offers them the freedom to exercise power over lesser creatures, some dragons' fantasies of domination are too grotesque to enact among their own kind. Such depraved dragons choose self-exile to Xen'drik in exchange for the right to play god among giant rabble and other groveling tribes of natives. Chafing at the closeness of other dragons in the Vast, these wyrms head to the wide expanses of the forsaken continent, where they might spend a thousand years never crossing paths with another of their kind.

CURSED LANDSCAPE

The abhorrent blood magic unleashed by the giants not only left their continent in shambles, but also tainted the land with many dangerous curses.

The Travelers' Curse (*SX* 25) warps distance and terrain, making a journey from one point to another in Xen'drik extremely unpredictable. The same trip could take days on one occasion and months the next. In

HOARDS IN XEN'DRIK

Xen'drik dragon hoards are similar to those of dragons in any classic setting: a heaping mountain of gold; the jewel-encrusted chalices of hobgoblin kings; entire veins of silver torn from mountainsides; golden harps whose strings are formed from the hair of angels; ancient blades imbued with epic magic and inlaid with soul gems containing the essence of emperor, archmages, and demons; tapestries of unicorns prancing in bright meadows woven by nymph queens of Thelanis; statues of adventurers petrified in foolish attempts to steal the treasure; and the like.

Exceptions to classic choices include: relics of the giant culture collected by dragons with an interest in history; early warforged prototypes developed by the quori; blood rite altars used by cabals of necromancers, and other items of note connected to Xen'drik's specific (and turbulent) history.

addition, terrain simply changes clime and condition randomly. A patch of earth hosting a steamy, overgrown jungle one night becomes a misty coniferous forest by the morning sun. Glaciers melt into lakes in hours, and deserts sprout temperate flora overnight.

This curse poses numerous problems for the continent's dragons. A bronze dragon could leave her underwater lair at the bottom of a tremendous lake on a hunt only to return a few hours later to a dry, sun-scorched crater. The inconvenience of losing a suitable

TEN XEN'DRIK ROGUE DRAGONS

Rogue dragons, with their varied agendas and personalities, make excellent villains and contacts. Presented here are ten rogues suitable for use in Xen'drik. DMs should tailor their ages, Hit Dice, and class levels (if any) to suit the campaign.

1. Tyrosian-Baed (CE male black dragon): Born in the steamy swamps of Xen'drik's interior, Tyrosian-Baed carved out a small kingdom for himself, subjugating several tribes of lizardfolk. He spends a great deal of his time breeding with his subjects and could be single-handedly responsible for the large blackscale lizardfolk population of Xen'drik. Most blackscale tribes refer to Tyrosian-Baed as the "Great Father." PCs who clash with blackscales could earn his ire.

2. Shendroa (NE female blue dragon): Shendroa was recently exiled to Xen'drik after the discovery of her despicable practice of stealing other dragons' eggs, cooking them in all manner of ways, and devouring them. She skulks the sandy plains of Menechtarun, surveying potential sites for a new lair and plotting ways to acquire a suitable hoard (and perhaps a few more eggs to feed her foul habit).

3. Kiznak the Exterminator (CN male green dragon): Kiznak has always been too friendly with elves for other dragons' comfort. After secretly consorting with the Undying Court for centuries, Kiznak earned himself a lengthy term of forced exile on Xen'drik. Although the drow are significantly less erudite than their fair-skinned Aerenal cousins, Kiznak finds them delightful company. His brushes with other humanoids have been less pleasing, so Kiznak has decided to exterminate the pesky nonelf "vermin" plaguing Xen'drik. The green dragon patrols routes frequently used by Stormreach humans, half-orcs, and other nonelves, unceremoniously killing any he encounters.

4. Vrakor Cinderheart (LE male red dragon): Vrakor comes from a long line of highly respected red dragons. His family's prestige saved him from a swift death when evidence of his involvement with the Talons of Tiamat came to light. Leniency left him languishing in southern Xen'drik. Vrakor continues his dark service to the Talons from afar, keeping tabs on fiendish hot spots such as Darkfire Crater (page 138). When the time is right, he can be a powerful ally to servants of the Lords of Dust hiding on Xen'drik.

5. Draj (CN male white dragon): Draj was born a red dragon, but one day, the shifting nature of Xen'drik simply transformed him into a white when his lair morphed from a volcanic hideaway to a glacial plateau. The change drove Draj mad, and he is steeped in denial. He has almost killed himself more than once trying to lair in magma fields.

6. Yulgrin (N male brass dragon): Yulgrin's mother was driven insane by the *altar of blood* (page 143), slew his father, then abandoned the wyrmling brass dragon. Yulgrin fends for himself among the dangerous predators of Menechtarun, doing his best to guard his parents' other five eggs. It is only a matter of time before Shendroa discovers the nest and devours Yulgrin's unborn siblings.

7. Brightshield (CG male bronze dragon): A newly minted young officer in the Bronze Brigade of the Light of Siberys, Brightshield was framed for the horrible murder of one of his superiors at the Vortex (page 54). The dark deed was actually committed by an evil gold dragon commander. Brightshield eluded capture and fled to Xen'drik, where he hides out on the bottom of a large lake. He spends his time either lamenting his woes, or devising plans to prove his innocence and expose his evil framer.

8. Jotara (CN female copper dragon): When Jotara was a wyrmling, her mother left to procure her a meal. She never returned. Jotara fended for herself and survived the harsh desert mesas of her birth. Now grown fearsome, the copper dragon scours the nearby countryside for any trace of her vanished mother. She has found nothing, and her desperation grows with each passing year. Anyone who can offer Jotara information on her mother's location (or details of her demise) earns a powerful ally. If Yulgrin (see above) is brought to Jotara, she lovingly raises the brass dragon as a surrogate mother, shielding him from harm.

9. Bane-Reth (LE male gold dragon): Bane-Reth is evil to the core and enjoys torturing lesser creatures and murdering their families as they watch. He was banished to Xen'drik after going on a killing spree through the Vast, slaughtering dozens of younger dragons. Bane-Reth claimed these dragons dishonored their race by consorting with inferior beings, but his actions were condemned by the Eyes of Chronepsis. Although unquestionably evil, he hates the Talons of Tiamat as much as he detests lesser creatures, seeing dragons who throw their lot in with fiends as the worst kind of traitors. Bane-Reth is engaged in a territorial dispute with Vrakor Cinderheart (see above). He could be an ally to PCs who oppose the fiend-loving red dragon, albeit an unreliable one.

10. Renosar-Kali (N male young adult silver dragon): Renosar-Kali once witnessed Ketheptis (page 145) lay waste to a tribe of drow. He fell instantly in love with the terrifying silver dragon, hoping to mate with her and raise her children. When he approached the wrathful female, she nearly tore him to pieces. Now Renosar-Kali nurses his wounds and pride. Ketheptis's violent rejection fills him with ferocious hate for her, but even so he cannot quell his attraction.

lair aside, strange shifts in terrain often provoke battles over territory. The distance between two dragons' lairs might be hundreds of miles one day and a stone's throw the next.

The Du'rashka Tul or "madness of crowds" (*SX* 53) is a curse leveled by the dragons themselves—a powerful ward to ensure that the giants never rise to prominence again. According to legend, the curse affects any group of creatures able to establish a sizable civilization on the forsaken continent, so that they are suddenly gripped by homicidal rage and spread out to kill everything in their path (including each other). The curse is a double-edged sword for dragons living on Xen'drik soil. On one hand, it allows them to maintain a stranglehold on their territory. Giants, drow, and other locals are terrified of the curse and avoid organizing into cities or larger social groups. Thus, dragons preying on such creatures can never be opposed by a native military force of any size. On the other hand, if a civilization arises and becomes affected by the Du'rashka Tul, the resultant chaos could cause significant problems for Xen'drik's dragons as crowds of homicidal maniacs beset their lairs, slay their minions, and cause all manner of headaches.

WILD DRAGONS

In Eberron, dragons are highly organized creatures with a stratified society that has birthed a unique and mysterious culture stretching back longer than that of any other race. The iconic image of the lone wyrm in a remote mountain cave atop a heaping pile of gold and jewels does not fit the average sophisticated Argonnessen dragon, nor the cosmopolitan draconic movers and shakers of Khorvaire. Xen'drik is where solitary dragons find a home. Far from the concerns of Argonnessen, the "civilized" bustle of Khorvaire, or the intricate machinations of the Sarlonan Inspired, many dragons of Xen'drik are content to recline in their lairs and await anyone foolish enough to try to filch their hoards. Others rule tiny fiefdoms of lesser creatures and prey on all who intrude upon their territory.

Although a few dragons residing in Khorvaire or Sarlona were born there, most are imported from Argonnessen. Even aberrant rogues who abandon their homeland possess at least a rudimentary comprehension of the Prophecy, and a passing familiarity with their people's expansive culture. Most of Xen'drik's dragons, though, are native to the continent and know nothing of the Prophecy. Some Xen'drik natives, intrigued on learning of a motherland filled with dragons, visit Argonnessen. Just as many could care less.

CAMPAIGN ARC: THE MARK OF XEN'DRIK

The mirrors located in the upper branches of the Abandoned Orrery were created by visionary dragon prophets of old who believed Xen'drik's role in the Prophecy was far from fulfilled. They crafted these mirrors with epic magic, planting them all across the forsaken continent. The scant few who know of their existence believe that if the mirrors are all configured properly, a beam of galactic light generated by a multiple lunar eclipse will descend and ricochet from mirror to mirror. The pattern formed will blazon a continent-sized Prophecy mark visible in its entirety only from far above Xen'drik.

The PCs could be charged with the task of aligning these mirrors or take it upon themselves to do so in pursuit of their own agenda. Such a daunting quest provides a unique opportunity to stage a continent-spanning campaign. Mirrors are strewn across Xen'drik, requiring the PCs to brave its farthest reaches. The party must explore giant ruins, ascend volcanic mountain heights and glacier crags, penetrate old-growth jungles, and explore other exotic locales to find and configure every mirror. Any or all the adventure locations detailed in this chapter, including the lairs of Zartarxis and Ketheptis, can be drawn upon to weave this entire chapter into one overarching campaign.

Aside from facing the worst Xen'drik has to offer, the PCs draw the attention of several powerful factions. Any number of dragons could appear to interfere with the party. Perhaps the "proper" configuration of these Prophetic mirrors is a matter of debate, with proponents of different interpretations sending agents to meddle with them. Enemies of dragonkind seek to avert this important event—the Lords of Dust, the Inspired, or other dire foes accost the party at every turn.

Those who succeed at this monumental task stand to earn great respect and greater rewards from draconic patrons, not to mention an indelible place in history. The party faces competition from other adventurers and explorers seeking to steal the glory.

In addition to locating and aligning the mirrors, the PCs need to create a unique elemental-bound observatory platform capable of hovering far above Xen'drik to view this titanic event of the Prophecy. They might need to orchestrate a massive conspiracy to maneuver House Lyrandar into constructing such a vessel. If the PCs endeavor to craft it on their own, the party must somehow keep this project under wraps lest Lyrandar or any other interested party attempt to steal it.

This observatory provides a truly unique setting for the climax of this campaign arc. Various factions interested in the Mark of Xen'drik converge there for a final, mile-high showdown above the forsaken continent. Fiends, dragons, quori, and competing teams of adventurers square off against the PCs and each other in an aerial battle of epic proportions. The fate of the Prophecy hangs in the balance.

PLACES OF INTEREST

The following locations represent only a few of the places where the shattered land's dragons might be found.

ABANDONED ORRERY

The largest planar orrery left on Xen'drik lies within the hollowed recesses of an immense tree nurtured by powerful druidic magic beyond the scope of any but Eberron's children. The dragon custodian of the apparatus lost his mind long ago and eventually withered to bone and dust. The orrery stands eerily deserted now, a silent testament to the dragons' might, but many believe its purpose in the Prophecy is not yet fulfilled.

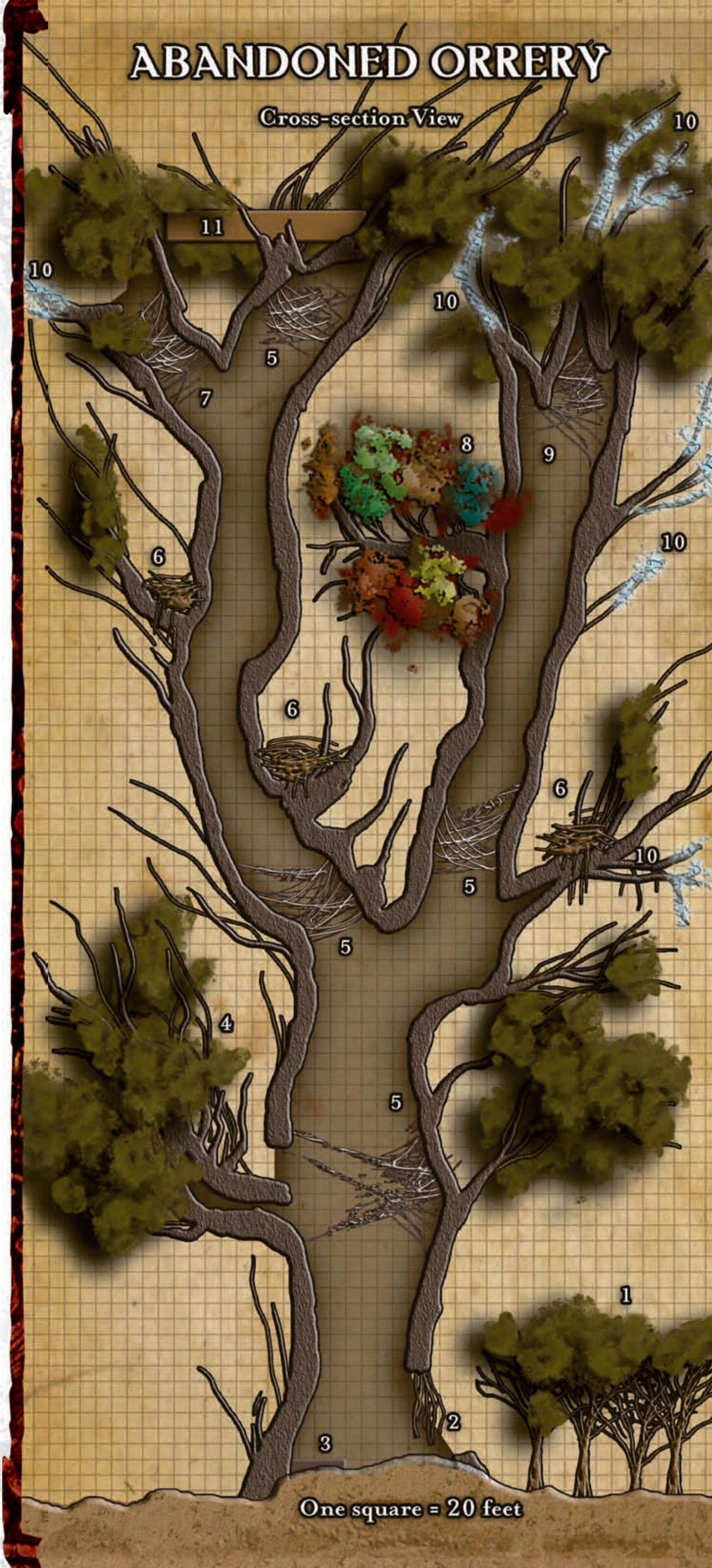
APPROACH

The planar orrery is shrouded in the thick jungle of the Valley of Shadows, nestled in a primeval forest whose trees breathe as one and whisper secrets older than the giant empire that rose and fell around them. The forest has a memory. Trespassers have provoked its ire through the ages, and it no longer tolerates such fools. The jungle closes in on all who brave its depths, forcing them to hack through vines as thick as pythons each step of the way. Explorers might glance back to find their hard-hewn trail reclaimed by slithering creepers in the blink of an eye. The mighty tree in which the orrery lies is visible only on breaching the thick forest around it.

The vine-choked woods part at long last to reveal a vast clearing. At the center stands an immense livewood tree, a titan of the forest to whom the surrounding woods genuflect in fear and awe. The ominous silence of this place eats words. Even the wind dares not trespass here.

FEATURES

The eerie silence of this place deadens sound, imposing a –10 penalty on all Listen checks. The sky above is always cloudless. No weather or wind effects function within 1 mile of the orrery. Darkness reigns inside the tree. No stairs exist; creatures that are unable



to fly or use *tree stride* must laboriously climb. Ascending the exterior requires DC 15 Climb checks; the polished interior walls take DC 25 Climb checks to scale.

KEYED LOCATIONS

The following features correspond to numbered areas on the map.

1. Ring of Trees: A circle of six trees stands before the entrance to the orrery. One of the trees is an aged treant named Maerdin, who challenges intruders. Any who speak Druidic or display a dragonmark are allowed to pass unmolested.

2. Veil of Vines: A thick curtain of living vines covers the entry arch. Most of the plants slither and hiss like serpents, but others bunch in disturbingly humanoid-shaped clumps that moan piteously at passersby. Anyone who touches the vines is infected with a fell magic disease (contact, Fort DC 20, incubation 1 minute, 1d4 Dex and blindness). Affected creatures painfully sprout vines from their skin and eyes; any whose Dexterity is reduced to 0 transforms into a clump of vines.

3. Throne of Old Marrowdrax: The black dragon custodian of the orrery rests here upon his dais-throne of polished wood. Millennia of seclusion frayed Marrowdrax's mind, and he sank into a torpor from which he never awoke. Most of his bones are dust now, but his imposing horned skull sits between the wooden talon-rests at the front of his dais-throne. His hoard has long ago been pilfered, but a successful DC 30 Search check reveals an orange *ioun stone* tucked in a hollow knot behind Marrowdrax's throne.

4. Tabernacle of Secrets: Hundreds of branches surround this broad platform of wood where the dragons of the orrery once held council meetings. A pedestal of polished wood rests at the center. If any living creature touches the pedestal, the branches around the platform twist and shift, shutting out the sun and sealing the area off completely. A *Mordenkainen's private sanctum* effect is raised and persists until the pedestal is touched again (which also returns the branches to their original configuration).

5. Giant Webs: In his later years, Marrowdrax's madness caused him to couple with all manner of foul forest denizens. Now a group of draconic ettercaps infests the orrery. The creatures' sprawling webs choke passageways, and the exsanguinated husks of captured birds, harpies, and even the occasional pegasus are tangled within. The ettercaps serve the arachno-fiend in area 9.

6. Roc Nests: Huge clusters of uprooted trees and shrubs wedged among these high branches serve as a nesting ground for rocs. These fierce avians prey on any creatures they detect and destroy any creature that threatens their eggs.

7. Dragon's Demise: This web contains the skeleton of an unfortunate young red dragon who fell prey to the arachno-fiend after a fray with some drow long ago. A DC 25 Search check can uncovers a *+3 adamantine icy burst arrow* lodged between its rib bones.

8. Grove of Many Worlds: Thirteen smaller trees grow from this large branch of the orrery. Each of the trees corresponds to one plane, and the branch twists and shifts over time in accordance with planar orbits. Only the trees of planes that orbit close to Eberron thrive and bear fruit; the others remain withered. At the time the PCs explore the orrery, Fernia and Mabar are waxing. A sturdy tree with bright auburn leaves bears fire-red oranges, and a gnarled, black tree with sinewy inky-berried vines thrives as well.

Anyone eating one of the oranges gains resistance to fire 10 for 24 hours and can use *fire shield* as a spell-like ability once (CL 20th). Tasting the bitter black berries grants a creature the ability to make a single touch attack that bestows a negative level on the target, and to use *darkness* once as a spell-like ability (CL 20th). The fruits confer these powers to a given creature only once every 24 hours, no matter how many are eaten.

9. Den of the Aracho-Fiend: The orrery's current master, a hideous winged spider-demon, rests here in an ornate black web. This unusually intelligent half-fiend Gargantuan monstrous spider prowls the orrery, feeding on anything that crosses its path.

10. Mirrors of Prophecy: Mirrored dragonshards mounted on these upper branches are destined to play a role in the Prophecy. The mirrors must be adjusted into a configuration aligned with matching mirrors located all across Xen'drik. Once this is done, a beam of brilliant light blazes across the sky from mirror to mirror, etching a Prophecy mark of continent-spanning size. Many of these dragonshards are missing now, stolen by thieves or those who hope to prevent this world-shaking fragment of the Prophecy from unfolding.

11. Skygazing Tower: This treetop chamber offers a breath-stealing view of the night sky.

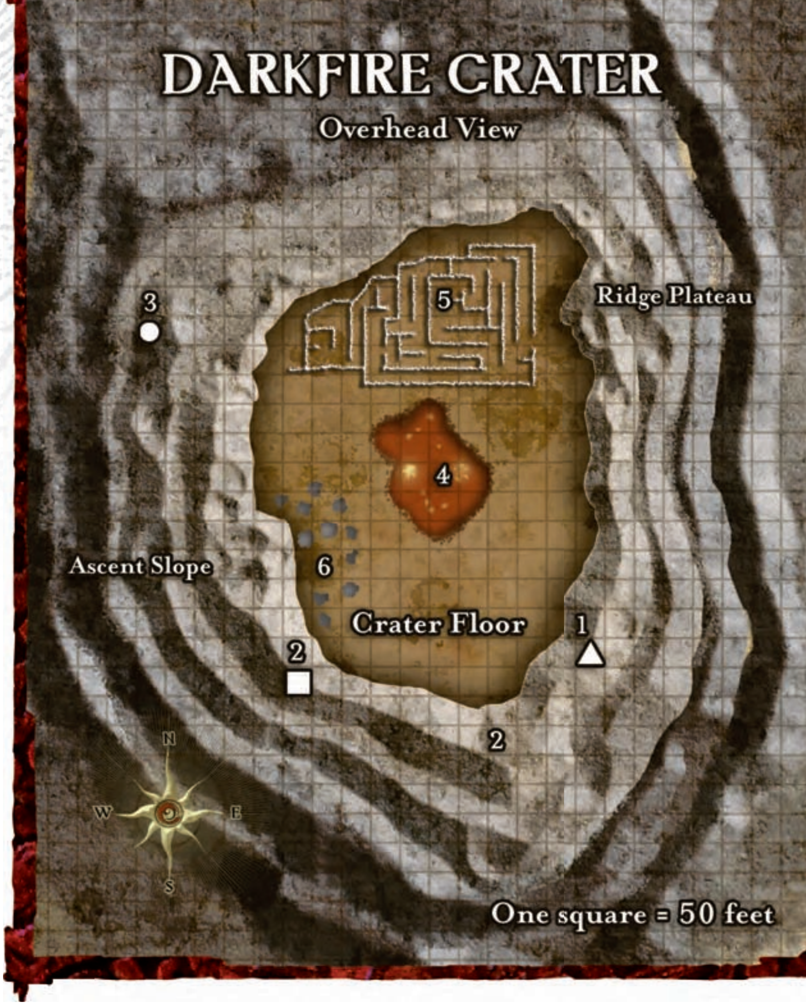
ABANDONED ORRERY ENCOUNTERS

(Check 1/hour, 8% chance)

d%	Encounter	EL
01–15	2d4 harpies (*MM* 150)	6–10
16–30	1d6 assassin vines (*MM* 20)	3–8
31–45	2d4 vine horrors (*FF* 185)	6–10
46–60	2d6 half-dragon ettercaps (*MM* 106, 146)	7–12
61–75	1d4 girallons (*MM* 126)	6–10
76–90	2d6 manticores (*MM* 179)	7–12
91–100	Half-fiend Gargantuan monstrous spider (*MM* 289, 147)	11

DARKFIRE CRATER

A long-dormant shield volcano, called Darkfire by the tribes who live in its ominous shadow, recently erupted in an explosion of fire and rocky shrapnel. Now a deep crater spews flesh-searing gas and hot magma from where the mountaintop stood. The torrent of fire, a portent of doom to the local tribes, is a great gift to House Tharashk prospectors seeking the rich reserves of Khyber shards once buried miles below the earth. But Darkfire holds a sinister secret in its burning heart. After the dragons laid the Lords of Dust low, they imprisoned hundreds of their fiendish minions within the depths of the volcano. Its eruption has set these menaces free to spread their evil once more.



APPROACH

The flaming caldera of Darkfire lends the night sky a hellish red gleam visible from miles away. The angry glow guides travelers along craggy trails to the snarling lip of the fiery crater. Climbing hazards aside, the demonic influence of Darkfire taints the landscape. Fiendish predators and possessed tribal folk harass the PCs as they approach. Smoldering ash falls in curtains from the sky, coating everything in a dismal black-gray shroud and searing the eyes of those who trespass here (DC 20 Fortitude save every hour or go blind for 1 hour). Wearing a wet cloth over the eyes negates the blinding effect but reduces visibility by half.

The burning reek of sulfur blisters the nostrils and stings the eyes. The trail crests a ridge of glossy black obsidian, where a shimmering haze of red heat beckons beyond. Below is a burning nightmare. Fields of fire and ash, smoke-belching pits of darkness, and a caldera of superheated magma promise scalding death to any who venture within. The mocking cackle of fiends rides the blistering wind, threatening to melt away the soul even as the fires sear the flesh.

FEATURES

Along the inner ridge, the oppressively hot gases rising from the volcano deal 2d6 points of nonlethal damage per round. Additionally, the cackling winds slowly shred a listener's sanity. Unless they render themselves deaf or plug their ears, creatures must succeed on a DC 25 Will save every day or take 2d6 points of Wisdom damage. When a creature's Wisdom is reduced to 0, it acquires the fiendish template and becomes chaotic evil, acting on every dark impulse. The blinding ash afflicts those here as well, and the scent ability does not function as sulfuric gas overpowers olfactory senses.

The demons' dark power infests the land. By night, the earth itself betrays those who linger in this tainted place. Anyone traveling after sundown must succeed on a DC 30 Will save or travel directly toward the Devil's Cauldron (area 4) regardless of the intended destination.

The crater floor is a fiendish paradise whose searing air deals 1d6 points of fire damage per round. Creatures that sleep inside the crater are tormented by dark dreams wherein frolicking demons gleefully tear their loved ones apart (DC 25 Will save or suffer the effect of a *nightmare* spell, CL 20th).

KEYED LOCATIONS

The following features correspond to numbered areas on the map.

1. House Tharashk Encampment: Precariously perched on the lip of the crater is a small camp of the Finders Guild. Drawn by the promise of dragonshards, these prospectors found instead the terrors of Darkfire. Their leader, a hulking half-orc named Kardobah (half-orc bounty hunter, *ECS* 238), is now possessed by a nalfeshnee named Muldrak-Syn. He murders and cannibalizes other prospectors at night. Two fiendish minotaurs (former diggers) accompany him at all times. Most of the other Finders succumbed to the cackling winds and now prey upon each other. One canny old prospector, a leathery half-orc named Grizlag, maintains his sanity and soul. He knows how to avoid the many dangers of Darkfire and helps any PCs who promise to escort him back to civilization.

2. Dragonshard Fields: Prior to the eruption, this expanse was already a source of Siberys shards fallen from the sky. Now the fields are rife with Khyber shards as well, expelled from the volcano during the eruption. Local tribes shun the area, heedless of the wealth contained here. Signs dot the landscape, bearing warnings such as "The fiendstones curse all who claim them" and "Go back from this evil place."

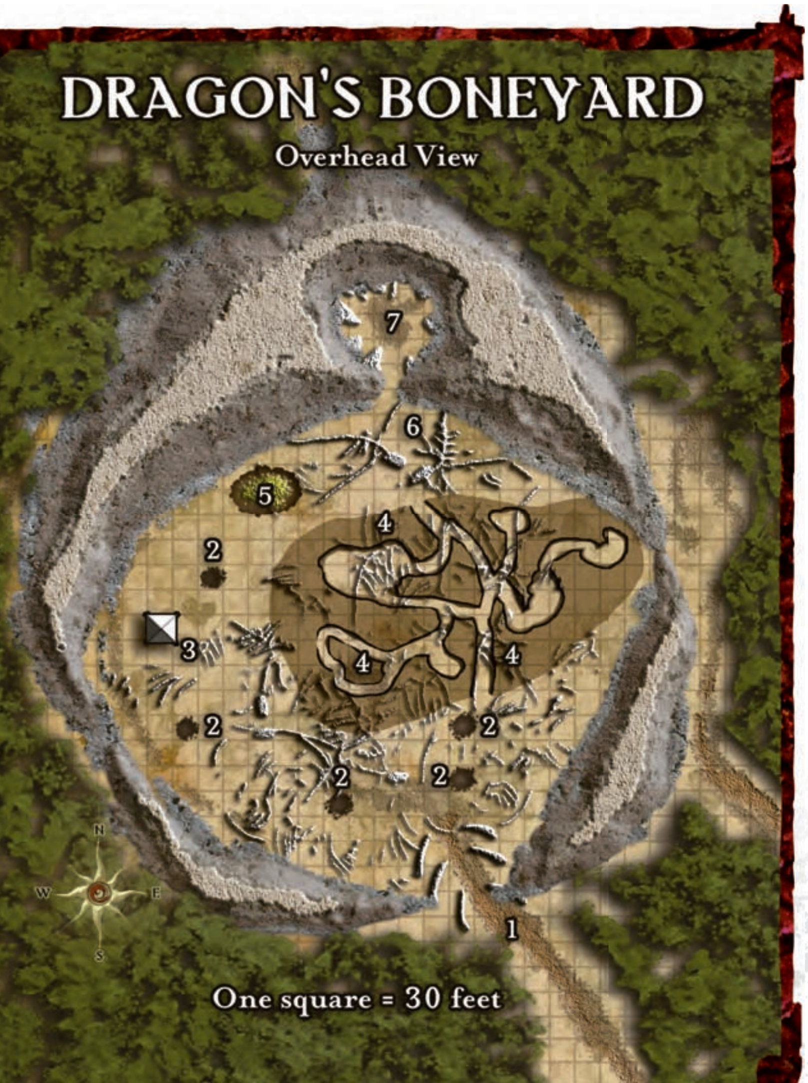
3. Cave of the Red Warden: Since the dragons created Darkfire, they have left one of their own to watch over it. The last Red Warden, an adult red dragon named Zinshear-Jhodjaros, was slain by the deluge of demons that burst forth during the initial eruption. His body remains here, a hideous puppet animated by four hellwasp swarms. A large *sending stone* (*CAr* 150), used to keep in constant contact with the Eyes of Chronepsis, sits in this cave. A rakshasa named Kintakathjalil deceives the Eyes on this end. In the illusionary guise of Zinshear-Jhodjaros, he has convinced them that all is well, and that although a "relatively minor" eruption has taken place, the fiends remain safely locked away."

4. Devil's Cauldron: This pit of boiling magma is infused with a heat unrivaled by that of any volcano in Eberron. The souls of a thousand fiends swim in liquid fire here, howling in constant torment. Anyone within 100 feet of the cauldron is subject to possession. Once per minute, a powerful demon or devil focuses its attention on a creature nearby and attempts to escape the binding fire of the Cauldron.

The potent heat of the Devil's Cauldron and the tainted power of the fiends within grant this pit the ability to reforge any destroyed artifact if its pieces are brought together in the magma. Any artifact so restored is plagued with a potent evil intelligence whose sole purpose is to lure as many creatures as possible to the Cauldron and free its dark fellows to wreak havoc on the world.

5. Crystal Maze of the Tiger-Fiend: A great tiger-headed balor named Cyl-Maaldrake, favored servant of the Lords of Dust, remains shackled in the heart of this dark crimson maze constructed of Khyber dragonshards. Chipping shards from the maze weakens its hold over Cyl-Maaldrake, and many of the fiends already released are working to disassemble his prison. Contingents of hezrous and bearded devils loyal to Cyl-Maaldrake toil to bring down the maze, but powerful wards trap them as well. The fiends seek humanoid proxies to mine the shards for them, and they send possessed agents to lure tribal peoples and prospectors from Stormreach to this unrivaled find of rich Khyber shards.

6. Lava Tubes: These large tunnels, bored through the crater wall by rivers of magma, are the last redoubt of a tribe of drow called the Darkwatchers, who served the Red Warden. The drow have not fared well since the eruption. With their patron laid low, they face constant attacks by hordes of devils and demons. Still the Darkwatchers lend their aid to any party brave enough to battle the sinister forces of the crater. The drow possess mighty talismans that ward off possession (as *protection from evil*) and negate the Wisdom-damaging whispers of the wind. They offer these boons to PCs who promise to contain the rising fiendish tide.



DARKFIRE CRATER ENCOUNTERS

(Check 1/hour, 8% chance)

d%	Encounter	EL
01–15	2d10 dretches (*MM* 42)	4–10
16–30	2d4 half-troll barbazus (*FF* 92)	11–15
31–45	2d6 fiendish scorrows (*SX* 81 and *MM* 107)	11–16
46–60	2d6 hellcats and 1 barbed devil (*MM* 54, 51)	12–15
61–75	1d4 hezrous and 1 glabrezu (*MM* 43, 44)	14–16
76–90	Marilith (*MM* 44)	17
91–100	2 mature nabassus (*FC1* 49)	17

DRAGONS' BONEYARD

Below a sheer cliff of jagged shale unfolds a sprawling wasteland of white bone. Most of the dragons who called Xen'drik home over the past several thousand years lie here. Those who fell in the war against the giants, and the many guardians left behind over the ages, sleep side by side in this mournful grove, their titanic bones piled 50 feet deep in places. Few dare disturb their eternal rest.

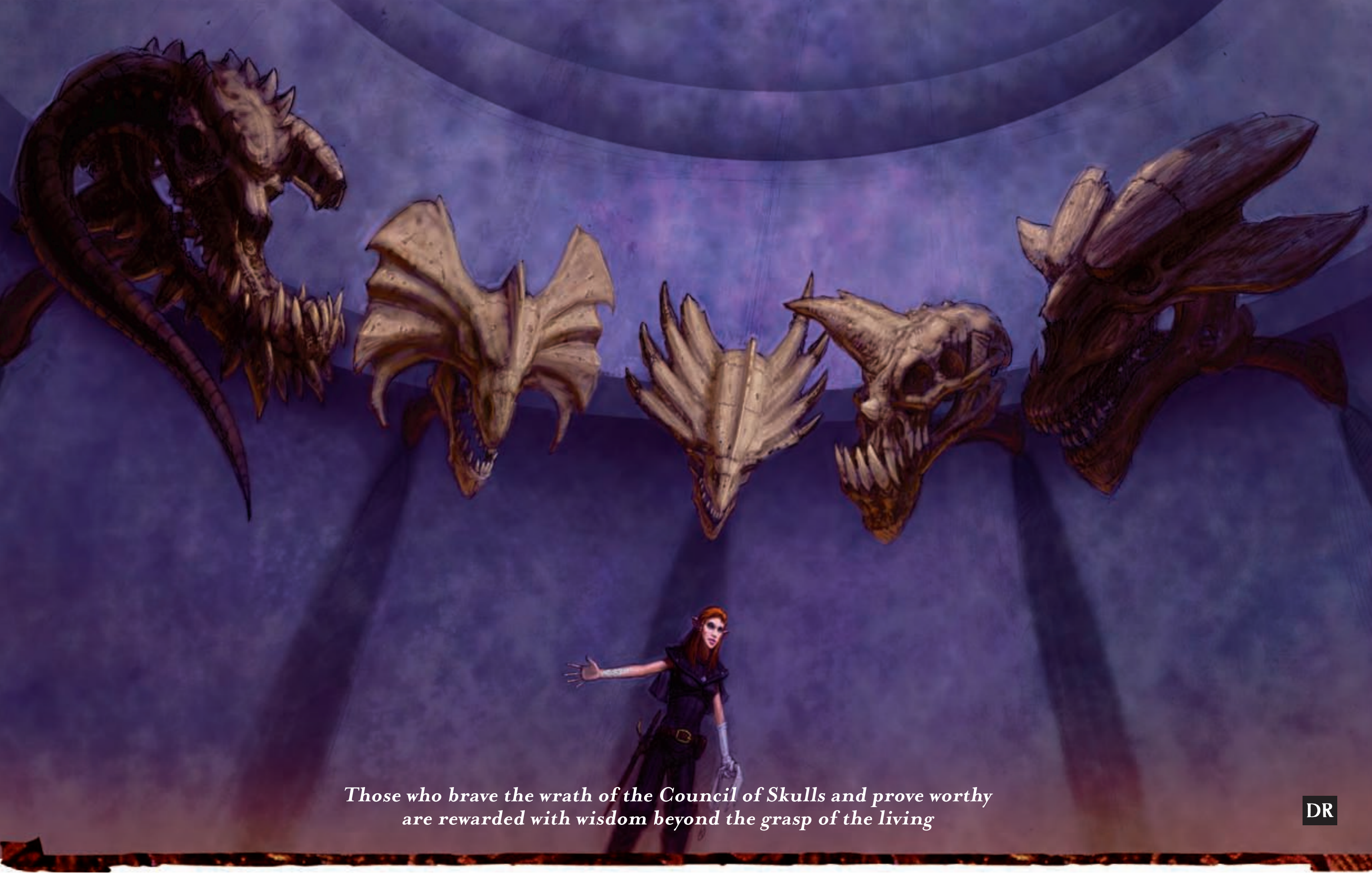
APPROACH

The boneyard is surrounded by thick jungle. Travelers know they are near by the sight of frequent heaps of smaller bones among the undergrowth. Primitive creatures are drawn to the boneyard when death is nigh, perhaps by some primal urge to rest close to the chosen of Eberron. The remains of tigers, elephants, and entire tribes of savage humanoids dot the surrounding jungle. A party closing in on the site from the northeast emerges from the treeline to the edge of a dizzying bluff overlooking miles of bleached bone.

The air is still in reverence; no jungle bird or hunting beast dares disturb the dragons' rest. Few beings glimpse these mighty creatures up close in life; the sheer majesty of their immense power is not diminished in death, but rather intensified by their unyielding stillness. The bones go on forever, piled higher than the jungle in some places. Teeth the size of a human's torso loom ominously from the open jaw of one giant skull. Another's horns, easily the size of two lightning rail cars stacked end to end, jut from a pile of massive ribs. Nearby, a gnarled talon, scarred from a thousand battles, clutches a smaller dragon's skull.

FEATURES

Time loses meaning among the ancient dead. Days and even weeks pass unnoticed here, and more than one visitor has perished from thirst without realizing its need. Everyday a trespasser here must succeed on a DC 25 Survival check or believe that no time has passed. An affected creature forgets to prepare new spells



Those who brave the wrath of the Council of Skulls and prove worthy are rewarded with wisdom beyond the grasp of the living

(believing it cannot do so yet) and does not eat or rest (becoming fatigued).

The entire boneyard is difficult terrain, forcing explorers to gingerly pick their way up and down treacherous piles of remains. Each round, a DC 10 Climb check is necessary to move. Failure on the check causes the subject to move 10 feet in a random direction instead, sliding on the shifting bones beneath.

KEYED LOCATIONS

The following features correspond to numbered areas on the map.

1. Ribbed Corridor: Several archways formed from the ribcage of a great wyrm lead into the boneyard. Warnings left by local tribes admonish trespassers in several languages with words such as "Never wake what rests within" and "The gods curse those who disturb their dead."

2. Bone Pits: The dead dragons do not suffer disturbance lightly, and anyone clambering over these areas runs the risk of impalement on the sharp protrusions beneath. Anyone stepping on one falls through, landing on bone spurs 20 feet below and taking 4d6 points of piercing damage (Reflex DC 20 half). A successful DC 25 Search check allows a creature to pinpoint these hazards.

3. White Obelisk: This tremendous monument stands in memorial of the Soldiers of the Light who fell in battle against the giants during the cataclysm that left Xen'drik in ruins. A Draconic inscription reads "Hail the victorious dead. Their sacrifice shall never be forgotten." Anyone who touches the obelisk experiences terrible visions of the great battle waged millennia ago. Flights of dragons soar overhead, raining arcane fury and tempests of elemental breath upon the land, razing entire stretches of jungle. The cacophonous din of the dragons' fury threatens to shake the listener apart, and the cries of dying giants writhing in agony cannot be forgotten. Anyone who experiences this vision is stunned for 2d6 rounds and automatically fails her next save against a dragon's frightful presence, as the horrible visions resurface in her mind.

4. Bone Warrens: These tunnels and burrows dug beneath the piles of bones are home to a tribe of troglodytes who safeguard the place. If 20 points of damage is dealt to the ceiling of the warrens, it collapses, raining tons of bones on those beneath (10d6 bludgeoning damage, Reflex DC 20 half), pinning them in the debris.

5. The Hoard Memoriam: This large pit contains a vast hoard of gold, precious jewels, and magic items. Its exact contents are left to the DM's discretion, but anyone who steals from the dead dragons is afflicted by a terrible curse. Over the course of the next three days, the cursed creature slowly transforms. The first day after the theft, it coughs up small rubies and sapphires, and strands of silver appear in its hair. The next day its skin takes on a pearly luster, and its joints harden painfully (–4 penalty to Strength and Dexterity). On the third and final day, the accursed one transforms into a pile of treasure. No magic can intervene, but returning the stolen items halts the process, after which a *wish* or *miracle* can reverse it.

6. Guardians of the Dead: Four intact dragon skeletons stand vigilant here, opposing any who seek entry to the *Council of Skulls* (see the sidebar). Use red dragon skeletons (*MM* 227) or skeletal dragons (*Dr* 192).

7. Council of Skulls: This large circular chamber hewn into the shale cliff contains the skulls of ten great wyrms, one of each color. Their souls remain to teach younger dragons the mysteries of their heritage and to treat with important humanoids with a potentially great role in the Prophecy. The skulls are mounted in the wall and speak to any who enter, though they annihilate those they find unworthy with their potent breath weapons. A worthy petitioner can gain a mighty boon (see sidebar).

DRAGONS' BONEYARD ENCOUNTERS

(Check 1/hour, 8% chance)

d%	**Encounter**	**EL**
01–15	2d4 half-dragon troglodytes (*MM* 246, 46)	5–9
16–30	1d4 hoard scarab swarms (*Dr* 168)	5–9
31–45	2d8 glidewings (*ECS* 280)	5–11
46–60	Dragonbone golem (*Dr* 164)	12
61–75	1d4 skeletal black dragons (*Dr* 192)	7–11
76–90	1d4 red dragon skeletons (*MM* 227)	8–12
91–100	Boneyard (*LM* 89)	14

OASIS OF BLOOD

Deep in the swirling sands of Menechtarun lies a fabled oasis where blood flows instead of water. Legends claim the ziggurat nearby is where the deity Ouralon first appeared to selected giants and taught them the secrets of magic. The titans reveled in their newfound power, creating a paradise in honor of their draconic patrons. Here, living marble statues frolicked among crystal pools whose magic waters promised life everlasting. Vast orchards of date trees sprouted from the sand, their fruit granting joyous visions.

When the giants perverted their powers with unspeakable blood rites, this paradise fell. The majestic marble statues wept crimson tears, and the once-clear pools clouded with dark red blood. The ziggurat still stands, a sand-scoured testament to the onetime bond shared by giant and dragon, but the horrid power of blood that now taints its altar draws dark denizens and evil spirits like moths to a flame.

APPROACH

The oasis is ringed in miles of swirling red sand, and by night the piteous moans of undead echo throughout. Wind-borne wraiths prowl the air, while zombie purple worms lurk underfoot. Undead sand giants (*MM3* 58)—some vampires, some mummified, others cursed to exist as devourers—rise from the dunes to prey on travelers.

MAGICAL LOCATION: COUNCIL OF SKULLS

These living skulls are those of some of the mightiest and oldest dragons who existed on Xen'drik. Their knowledge is vast and jealously guarded; their arcane power is beyond comprehension and rarely shared.

Lore: Characters gain the following pieces of information about the *Council of Skulls* by making Knowledge (arcana) checks at the appropriate DCs, as given below.

DC 15: The *Council of Skulls* is a myth. Even if it did exist, who would be foolish enough to go rooting through the Dragons' Boneyard to find it?

DC 20: The *Council of Skulls* is a collection of ten dragons' skulls, one representing each color. It is said to be composed of the mightiest of dragonkind; though dead, their spirits persist.

DC 25: The *Council of Skulls* offers the wisdom of the ages to other dragons. The secrets possessed by these ancient souls are far beyond mortal comprehension.

DC 30: The *Council of Skulls* deals with dragons, and others who trespass there rarely return. It is rumored that a nondragon might be granted an audience if it offers new information on a subject of great interest.

Description: See Area 7.

Prerequisite: To gain the boon of the *Council of Skulls*, a nondragon creature must either possess a dragonmark or have at least 15 ranks in a Knowledge skill. It must also speak Draconic.

Location Activation: A creature that wishes the boon of the *Council of Skulls* must present the dragon spirits with a piece of important information they do not already know. To come up with lore unknown to these ancient minds requires a successful DC 40 Knowledge check. In lieu of the check, the creature might offer up an interesting tidbit of new knowledge concerning the Prophecy, though this information must be incredibly important to earn the dragons' favor.

Recharge: A creature can seek the location's boon as many times as it likes, though each time it runs the risk of being utterly destroyed in a deluge of elemental breath.

Special Ability (Ex): A creature that satisfies the dragons' hunger for knowledge is immediately allowed to ask any question of these ancient loremasters. Treat this effect as a *legend lore* spell. In addition, if a creature especially pleases one of the council (through roleplaying or with a successful DC 40 Diplomacy check), the skull breathes gently upon the lucky individual, infusing it with draconic power. Once per week for 1 hour, this creature can transform into a half-dragon of the variety whose favor it earned (apply the template to the base creature).

Duration: The *legend lore* effect is instantaneous; the half-dragon transformation ability lasts for 1 month.

Aura: Strong divination and transmutation.

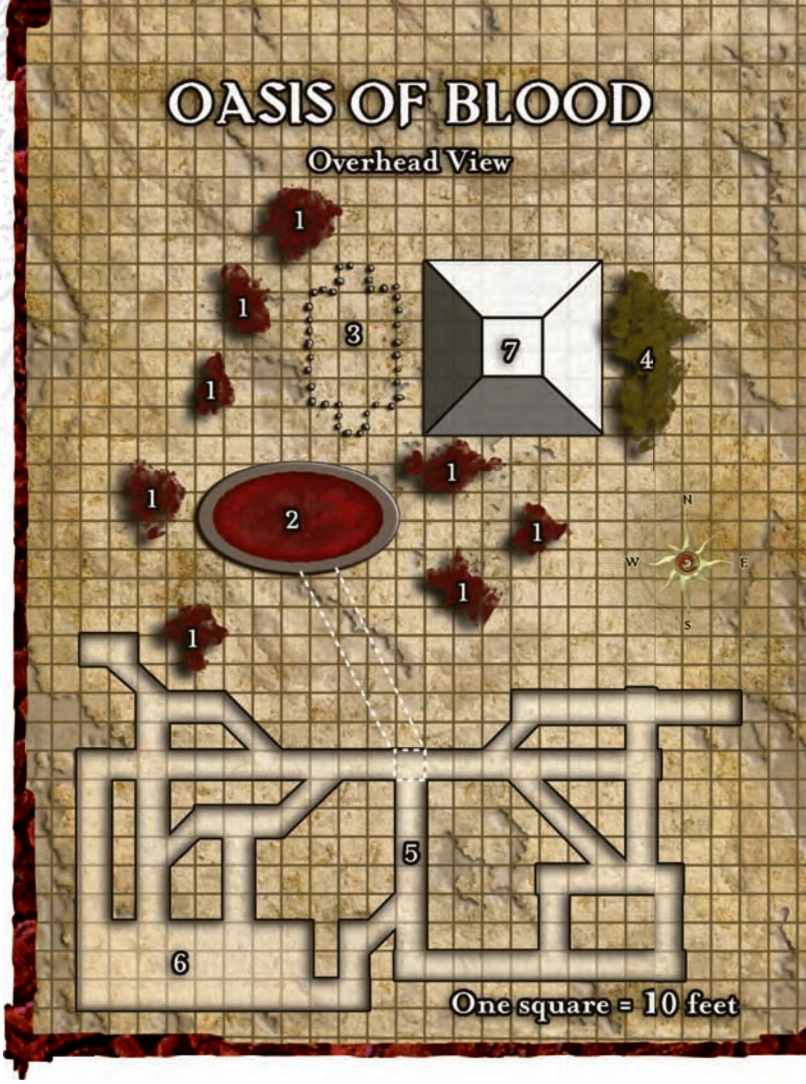
Ability Value: 2,050 gp per *legend lore;* 7,680 gp per transformation boon.

The constant sandstorm raging here confuses even skilled rangers and druids. A DC 50 Survival check is necessary to reach the oasis. Alternatively, if a creature cuts itself deeply enough to leave a thick trail of blood over the course of a day's travel (losing at least 50% of it hit points), it can follow this trail directly to the oasis after the next sunrise.

A crimson moon holds court over red stars in the night sky above the oasis. Orchards of malformed date trees surround a towering ziggurat of alabaster. The pristine white structure of stone would be beautiful in any other milieu, but it seems an obscenity set against this gruesome landscape.

FEATURES

No sandstorm intrudes upon this unhallowed site; the winds are always calm. Light from the sun, moon, or any other source is always tainted with a red cast, and illumination does not allow creatures to distinguish color. Living creatures bleed from the ears, nose, eyes, and gums while they linger at the oasis. This deals 2 points of Constitution damage every hour (which does not heal naturally until they leave), and imposes a –2 penalty on all ranged attack rolls and Spot checks. Any wound received in the oasis bleeds for 1 hit point per round until a successful DC 25 Heal check is made or curative magic is employed. The blood wept by the statues, flowing from the pool, and dripping from the trees stains anything or anyone it touches, and it doesn't wash off until the object or person is 100 miles away from the oasis.



Altar of Blood

This large dais of chalk-white stone has stood pristine for millennia. Blood spilled upon it is absorbed to the last drop, and the altar shines more brightly with each foul sacrifice perpetrated there.

Lore: Characters gain the following pieces of information about the *altar of blood* by making Knowledge (arcana) checks at the appropriate DCs, as given below.

DC 15: The *altar of blood* lies in a remote oasis shrouded in crimson sand. Those who venture there end up offering their own hearts to the giant kings of old.

DC 20: The sacrifice required for the altar is too great for any to pay. The blood it wants is too sacred to give, even though the power it offers is beyond compare.

DC 25: One must give the altar a dear love to gain its dark boon. It accepts no lesser sacrifice. The power it grants is enough to elevate the humblest being to emperor or to cast down the mightiest foe.

DC 30: The altar taints one's soul. It is better to cut out one's own heart than to seek its power.

Description: The altar is a pure white dais of stone carved with blood canals and skull motifs.

Prerequisite: To use the *altar of blood,* a creature must be an arcane spellcaster and have at least 10 ranks in Knowledge (arcana).

Location Activation: A creature that wishes to activate the *altar of blood* must sacrifice a loved one upon it. The blood of a family member, longtime companion, or lover is required to satiate the altar's vile thirst. If the creature does not truly love the sacrifice, the altar does not activate. In most cases, the activator is somehow tricked or coerced into using the altar. Rarely, a creature requires the altar's power to complete a task so important that it willingly sacrifice one it loves to gain that ability.

Recharge: A creature can use the altar as often as it wishes. In fact, once a activator has sacrificed a loved one to the altar, it is compelled to do so again and again unless it succeeds on a DC 30 Will save, believing it truly needs the power despite the soul-searing cost.

Special Ability (Ex): A creature that activates the *altar of blood* has its effective caster level increased by 2. In addition, it gains the ability to use *earthquake* and *storm of vengeance* as spell-like abilities once per week.

Duration: The first time a creature activates the altar, the effect's duration is 1 month. This period decreases by 1 week each subsequent activation (and by 1 day after it is reduced to a single week).

Aura: Overwhelming evocation and transformation.

Ability Value: 40,000 gp per affected creature.

KEYED LOCATIONS

The following features correspond to numbered areas on the map.

1. Heart Trees: These veined trees weep rivulets of fresh blood from their trunks. Within a hollow in each is the beating heart of a drow slave horribly sacrificed by the giants of old. Eating a heart confers a *heal* effect as the spell and grants a permanent +2 bonus to Constitution (once only per creature, no matter how many hearts it eats), but forevermore the eater dreams of being sacrificed on the *altar of blood* (page 143). Every night it must succeed on a DC 20 Will save or awaken fatigued the next morning. (The bonus to Constitution doesn't stop the Constitution damage from bleeding while at the Oasis.)

2. Pool of Eyes: This pool once flowed with crystal waters whose restorative powers were unmatched. Now it is thick with congealed blood, and eyeballs float on its surface. The eyes follow anyone who nears the pool, and the thoughts of any creature within 50 feet are projected as if by an *amulet of thought projection*. In addition, any creature that comes within 10 feet must succeed on a DC 25 Will save or be compelled to tear out its own eyes and hurl them into the gory pool.

3. Grotesque Statuary: Living marble statues in the shape of giants, elves, and dragons languish here, weeping crimson tears and engaging in ghastly self-mutilation. The statues break off their own limbs and deface themselves, then mortar broken pieces back into place using a sticky mixture of blood, pulped entrails, and sand. The result is something out of a sculptor's twisted nightmare, with blood and bits of tissue oozing out between dozens of cracks along the statues' forms. Anyone who enters the statuary is targeted with a *flesh to stone* effect (Fortitude DC 20, CL 20th). The living marble statues smash anyone turned to stone into shards, then grind the victims' dust into their own marble "skin" or use it for mortar when repairing themselves. The statues fight if attacked and are identical to stone golems in every respect.

4. Orchard of Eulogy: The bittersweet dates growing here once granted eaters visions of the future. Now any creature that tastes them sees visions of its own death. The next time the eater saves against a death effect, it must roll twice and take the lower result. In addition, an affected creature cannot make a stabilization check the next time it is reduced to fewer than 0 hp. The dates are sought after by assassins and by evil creatures that enjoy feeding them to their enemies.

5. Underblood Tunnels: These expansive tunnels beneath the marble pool hold many secrets of the giants, including caches of powerful magic weapons hidden from the Eyes of Chronepsis. Rumor has it that a ruby the size of a giant's fist, containing a soul-bound titan named Draxveros the Wyrm-Cleaver, is located within.

6. Giants' Vengeance: This large submerged chamber contains an enormous statue in honor of a primeval deity of giantkin, Rom-Praxis, whose worship was long ago forbidden by the dragons. The eyes of this hidden shrine contain the giants' greatest achievement. At the height of their power, the titans of old sacrificed thousands of slaves and wrought two *Orbs of Dragonkind* (one red, one gold). They hid these mighty artifacts in the blood of the shrine where they secretly honored their forbidden god and masked them with potent magic, intending to one day usurp the dragons and claim power over Eberron. The dragons descended upon the giant empire so quickly that the titans were unable to retrieve these treasures and put them to use. The artifacts wait now, submerged in blood, for anyone foolish enough to seize them. If the dragons were to learn of the *Orbs*, they would stop at nothing to destroy them and anyone who knew of their existence.

7. White Ziggurat: The alabaster ziggurat standing sentinel over the oasis is rumored to be the spot where Ouralon once opened the titans' eyes to arcane magic. Later, beset by the legions of Dal Quor, the giants perverted this site with detestable rituals of blood magic, shaking the continent with power no creature was ever meant to wield. Drunk on this newfound might, and outraged at the rebellion of their elf slaves, the giants spilled an ocean of blood in preparation for another dark rite of cataclysm. The dragons averted this ceremony, but the pollution of these abhorrent rites left its stain on the oasis for all time. At the top of the ziggurat stands the *altar of blood*, a powerful magical location whose gift and curse are equally potent.

OASIS OF BLOOD ENCOUNTERS

(Check 1/hour, 8% chance)

d%	Encounter	EL
01–15	1d4 blood amniotes (*LM* 87)	9–13
16–30	Cloud giant ghost (*MM* 120, 116)	13
31–45	Angel of decay (*LM* 83)	15
46–60	1d4 blood fiends (*FF* 47)	14–18
61–75	1d4 greater stone golems (*MM* 136)	16–20
76–90	2d10 cloud giant skeletons (*MM* 227)	9–15
91–100	1d4 nightwalkers (*MM* 196)	16–20

XEN'DRIK ENCOUNTERS

KETHEPTIS

"My people are no more. I am the last of the Blood Ghost Clan, and here I lie broken. Ketheptis, the One-Eyed Crone, claimed us. My father was the greatest of our war chiefs. He single-handedly smote the cloud giant warlord, Darkrond, and claimed the skulls of his sons as well. But the Crone devoured him as casually as a man might eat a morsel of cooked pig. She feasted upon our people, and she took both my legs. She spoke to me in a voice like a great wind thundering through the mountain passes. She told me I was to be spared as a harbinger to the rest of the drow. I am a living omen of my people's doom. I gazed into her unflinching eye and beheld a hate so deep no mortal could comprehend its awful power. I serve little purpose now, my body tattered by her unforgiving talons, but I can at least warn any who venture toward her domain. Turn back. The Crone's fury is eternal and merciless as winter. She cannot die."

—Jarkilos, last of the Blood Ghost Hunters

High along the jagged crest of the Bluespine Peaks lairs the mighty Ketheptis. The Crone turns her one eye upon the many drow tribes of the jungles north of the Bluespines. Her gaze festers with hate, and an ancient vendetta crouches in her icy heart.

Ketheptis came to Xen'drik a newborn silver wyrmling, in the care of her parents, Lehtokorathil and Baasrashal. The family of silver dragons made a home in the lower peaks of the Bluespines, but their predations on nearby drow soon drew the attention of a powerful band of Sulatar. The fire-wielding drow trapped the elder dragons in their lair and slaughtered them.

Ketheptis hid in a high alcove and looked on from her vantage point as the drow butchered her parents. She roared in terror as her mother was burned alive and her father's head was cleaved from his neck. One of the drow put an arrow through Ketheptis's left eye, nearly killing her, but the wyrmling escaped and crawled away into the snow-shrouded heights of the Bluespines.

Hate is a powerful force, and it ate at Ketheptis's heart. She decided centuries ago that she would see every drow in Xen'drik dead. She pursues this plan of genocide today by various means.

In her youth, she flew at drow tribes in the throes of fury, which nearly got her killed more than once. Ketheptis's tactics matured as she did. She went down among the drow tribes in the form of a one-eyed dark elf crone possessing magical powers, and she poisoned their leaders' hearts against one another. The crone watched as brutal warfare broke out, encouraging escalation and horrific atrocities on all sides. Some of the savage practices of drow tribes that Khorvairian explorers decry—cannibalism, maiming the children of their enemies, slowly eviscerating prisoners alive—actually spawned in Ketheptis's twisted mind and were spread by her evil influence.

After the tribes in any one region are sufficiently weakened by this ploy, Ketheptis sheds her guise and slaughters the remainder, often leaving a single maimed survivor to tell the tale. Her hubris and need to inspire terror among her prey now work against her. Tales of her vile deception and secret war of genocide have spread, forcing her to pursue other avenues of eradicating her enemies. Most recently, she has developed virulent plagues intended to reduce the drow population of Xen'drik to a mass of rancid corpses. Ever single-minded of purpose, Ketheptis cares little if these blights decimate other races as well.

DESCRIPTION

Ketheptis never sought to regenerate her missing eye, preferring the ugly wound as a constant reminder of what the drow took from her. On occasion, she mounts the skull of a particularly formidable foe in the socket to terrorize her prey. Her entire left side sets the vacant eye against a grotesque backdrop: The once-shining scales along her left flank are rent, and several scorch marks are a souvenir of a particularly painful foray against the Sulatar. An experiment in vile magic gone awry twisted her left talon, leaving it forever gnarled and blackened, and her head crest is tattered from constant battle.

As Ketheptis's weathered wings unfurl, countless drow skulls and bones dangling from them clatter unsettlingly. Though maimed, her physique is prodigious for her age, and the still-gleaming silver scales of her right side ripple with the movements of powerful muscles beneath.

MINIONS

Ketheptis is paid homage by a sizeable clan of frost giants whose ruler, Thraalgrum, shares her purpose. The primordial (*SX* 81) frost giant scoured the frozen citadels of Everice for clues to his ancestors' downfall. His interpretation of the evidence tars the drow as well-cared-for slaves who turned spitefully against their benevolent masters.

Thraalgrum readily pledged his loyalty to the mighty silver dragon, and their shared hatred led to fleeting romances in the frost giant's younger days. Two such liaisons bore fruit in Letho and Baasra. The half-dragon frost giants serve their mother's whim. Baasra dotes on her aging father, but Thraalgrum disgusts Letho, who views his father's obsession with their giant ancestors as folly. His patricidal intentions are stayed by Ketheptis, who still has use for his sire.

Thraalgrum is lithe and tall, with large oval eyes and a smooth, hairless body. He has stood by Ketheptis's side for nearly a century but now grows decrepit with age, his deep blue skin stretched tight over bone.

Baasra takes after her father, viewing knowledge as power; her frame is underdeveloped compared to that of her massive brother. She dabbles in the Prophecy. She enjoys nothing more than capturing dragonmarked humanoids, whose minds she pierces with spells before she peels away their dragonmarked skin for preservation.

Letho is as brutish as he is stupid. He takes perverse pleasure in maltreating his father but obeys Ketheptis's every word as law.

Ketheptis's newest minion is an ancient elf vampire named Dekaraz, whose prisonlike tomb was excavated beneath her latest lair. Frozen in the deep ice long ago, Dekaraz is a forgotten horror of Qabalrin, whose deeds were so black they earned him banishment even among his own vile enclave. Dekaraz skillfully feigns amnesia and pretends to serve Ketheptis faithfully. Secretly, the vampire collects information concerning the fate of his shadowy civilization and the rising Blood of Vol. For the time being, he finds his position at Ketheptis's side useful.

ALLIES AND ENEMIES

Enemies of her enemy are Ketheptis's friends. To this extent, several giant tribes at war with the drow find a ready ally in the One-Eyed Crone, though these giants often end up expendable pawns in her long-reaching plans for genocide.

Ketheptis has recently acquired a powerful ally in House Lyrandar. Her mysterious benefactor contacts her through intermediaries, but his commitment to "the solution of the drow problem" seems unquestionable. The ally claims to have lost his young wife to a particularly vicious drow attack, and this traumatic experience led him to paint the entire dark elf population with a broad brush. Ketheptis suspects the Lyrandar's interest in her efforts against the drow are more financially motivated, but she finds the assistance of this new ally agreeable enough.

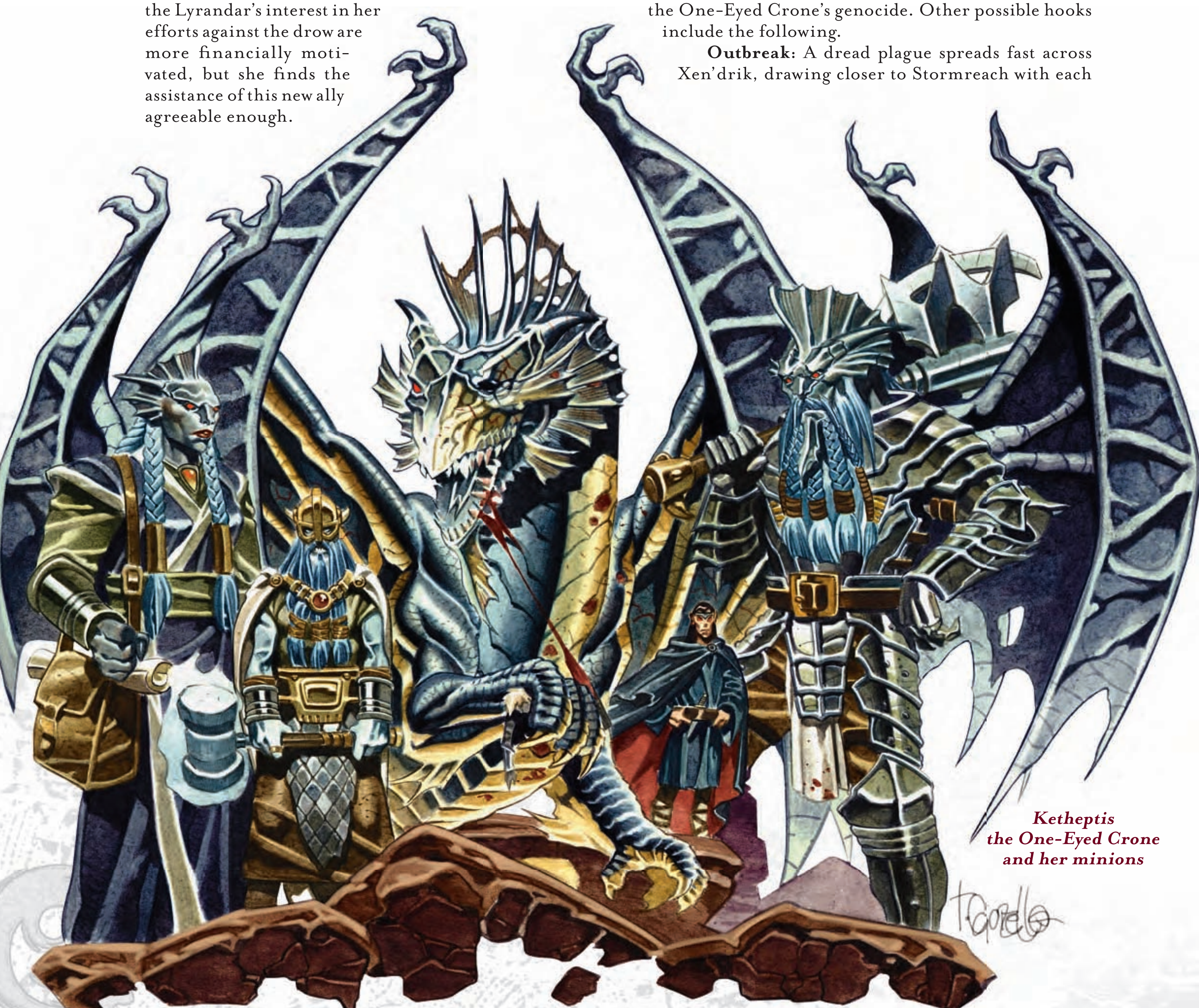
All drow and any who aid them are Ketheptis's enemies. Among the dark elves, none pose a greater threat than the Sulatar, who have rebuffed her personal attacks on many occasions. The burn scars from one ordeal are a reminder not to treat these fire-wielding drow lightly. The recent rise of the Umbragen darkens Ketheptis's mood as well. So desperate is her quest for genocide that she even seeks allies among the foul denizens of Xoriat to expunge the Umbragen for her.

News of her plans to wipe an entire race off the face of Eberron has begun to reach her ancestral home of Argonnessen. Such tales could draw the concern of other dragons, who view such a vile act of destruction as cataclysmic to the Prophecy's current course.

HOOKS

The PCs could become embroiled in the age-old conflict between Ketheptis and the drow in a number of ways. Perhaps a friend or relative of theirs visiting a drow community was killed when Ketheptis attacked, or was taken prisoner by the dragon. If the PCs have allies among the drow, the dark elves might entreat the party to end the One-Eyed Crone's genocide. Other possible hooks include the following.

Outbreak: A dread plague spreads fast across Xen'drik, drawing closer to Stormreach with each



Ketheptis the One-Eyed Crone and her minions passing day. The PCs must unravel the source of the contagion and seek out Ketheptis's lair. Only there can the plague be undone.

Spoils of War: Ketheptis possesses an awe-inspiring collection of seized drow artifacts and relics, and the PCs might be contracted to steal a particular item of legend from her hoard.

Origins of the Blood: If the PCs are entangled with the Emerald Claw, they learn of a potential agent among Ketheptis's minions whose knowledge of the Blood of Vol's dark past could grant the rising cult greater power. The party must find Dekaraz and destroy the vampire before agents of the Emerald Claw help him escape.

Lyrandar's Secret: PCs involved with House Lyrandar are asked to investigate strange correspondences between a Lyrandar enclave and an unknown party in the Bluespine Peaks.

Ketheptis, The One-Eyed Crone CR 21

Female mature adult silver dragon barbarian 5/bloodscaled fury^{Dr} 4
CE Huge dragon
Init +0; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., keen senses, *true seeing*; Listen +40, Spot +16
Languages Common, Draconic, Elven, Giant, Risian, Undercommon
Aura frightful presence (210 ft., DC 31)

AC 43, touch 13, flat-footed 43; improved uncanny dodge (–2 size, +6 armor, +24 natural, +5 deflection)
hp 459 (34 HD); **DR** 10/magic
Immune acid, cold, paralysis, sleep
Resist *freedom of movement*; **SR** 24
Fort +26, **Ref** +19, **Will** +27; one-eyed
Weakness vulnerability to fire; Suppress Weakness

Speed 50 ft. (10 squares), fly 150 ft. (poor); Hover
Melee bite +38 (2d8+11) and
2 claws +36 each (2d6+5) and
2 wings +36 each (1d8+5) and
tail slap +36 (2d6+16)
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (15 ft. with bite)
Base Atk +30; **Grp** +49
Atk Options Blind-Fight, Cleave, Improved Snatch, Power Attack, magic strike, rage 2/day (13 rounds)
Special Actions Shock Wave, Wingstorm, breath weapon, crush 2d8+16 (DC 34)
Combat Gear *rod of lesser quicken metamagic, rod of enemy detection*
Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 9th):
4th (5/day)—*charm monster* (DC 18), *dimension door*
3rd (7/day)—*dispel magic, displacement, haste*
2nd (7/day)—*bull's strength, detect thoughts* (DC 16), *mirror image, whispering wind*
1st (7/day)—*cause fear* (DC 15), *expeditious retreat, identify, ray of enfeeblement* (+30 ranged touch), *shield*
0 (6/day)—*acid splash* (+30 ranged touch), *arcane mark, detect magic, detect poison, ghost hand, mage hand, message, read magic*
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th):
2/day—*feather fall*
3/day—*fog cloud*

Abilities Str 32, Dex 10, Con 24, Int 20, Wis 23, Cha 18
SQ alternate form, cloudwalking, draconic fury, fast movement, fearsome presence, scales of blood, trap sense +1
Feats Blind-Fight, Cleave, Hover, Improved Snatch^{Dr}, Iron Will, Multiattack, Power Attack, Rend$^{B\ Dr}$, Shock Wave^{Dr}, Snatch, Suppress Weakness^{Dr}, Wingstorm^{Dr}
Skills Concentration +35, Diplomacy +38, Hide –8, Intimidate +41, Jump +28, Knowledge (arcana) +33, Knowledge (architecture and engineering) +33, Knowledge (nature) +37, Listen +43, Search +33, Sense Motive +38, Spot +40, Survival +15 (+19 aboveground environs, avoiding hazards and getting lost, following tracks), Swim +20, Use Magic Device +34
Possessions *bracers of armor +6, ring of protection +5, ring of freedom of movement, crystal ball (true seeing)*

Magic Strike (Ex) Ketheptis's natural attacks are treated as magic weapons for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.
Breath Weapon (Su) 50-ft. cone, once every 1d4 rounds, damage 14d8 cold, Reflex DC 34 half; or 50-ft. cone, once every 1d4 rounds, paralyzed 1d6+7 rounds, Fortitude DC 34.
Draconic Fury (Ex) When raging, Ketheptis gains +6 to Strength and Constitution and +3 to Will saves.
Improved Snatch Against Medium or smaller creatures, bite for 2d8+11/round or claw for 2d6+5/round.
One-Eyed (Ex) Ketheptis takes a –4 penalty on saving throws to resist blinding effects.
Rend When Ketheptis hits with both claw attacks, she latches onto the opponent's body and tears the flesh. This attack automatically deals an extra 4d6+16 points of damage.
Scales of Blood (Su) When Ketheptis rages, her scales weep blood, giving her whole body a red sheen. This effect increases her spell resistance and damage reduction while raging.
Shock Wave As a full-round action, Ketheptis can strike a solid surface with her tail to create a shock wave radiating out 125 feet. Roll a single bull rush attack that affects all in the radius; those who fail their opposed Strength check are knocked down. Structures and unattended objects in range take 1d6+11 points of damage.
Suppress Weakness Ketheptis takes one quarter again as much (+25%) damage from fire attacks instead of one half again as much (+50%).
Wingstorm As a full-round action, Ketheptis can hover in place and use her wings to create a blast of air in a cylinder with a radius and height of 70 feet. The force of this wind is that of a windstorm (*DMG* 95). Creatures ignore the checked effect unless they are airborne (then they are blown back 1d6 × 5 feet) or unless Ketheptis keeps the wind in effect for longer by sacrificing her actions every turn.

When raging, Ketheptis's statistics change as follows:
AC 41, touch 11, flat-footed 41
hp 561; **DR** 15/magic
SR 28
Fort +29, **Will** +30
Melee bite +41 (2d8+14) and
2 claws +39 each (2d6+7) and
2 wings +39 each (1d8+7) and
tail slap +39 (2d6+21)
Atk Options crush 2d8+21 (DC 37)
Special Actions breath weapon (DC 37)
Abilities Str 38, Con 30
Skills Concentration +25, Jump +22, Swim +34

ICE CLIFF LAIR

A vast glacial shelf off the sheer face of one of the Bluespine Peaks serves as Ketheptis's lair. A false lair, composed of expansive ice caves, is little more than a deathtrap for those foolish enough to seek out the One-Eyed Crone. The lair proper lies beneath the glacier, ensconced in the base of the mountain and well hidden beneath several feet of thick ice.

Keyed Locations

The following features correspond to numbered areas on the map.

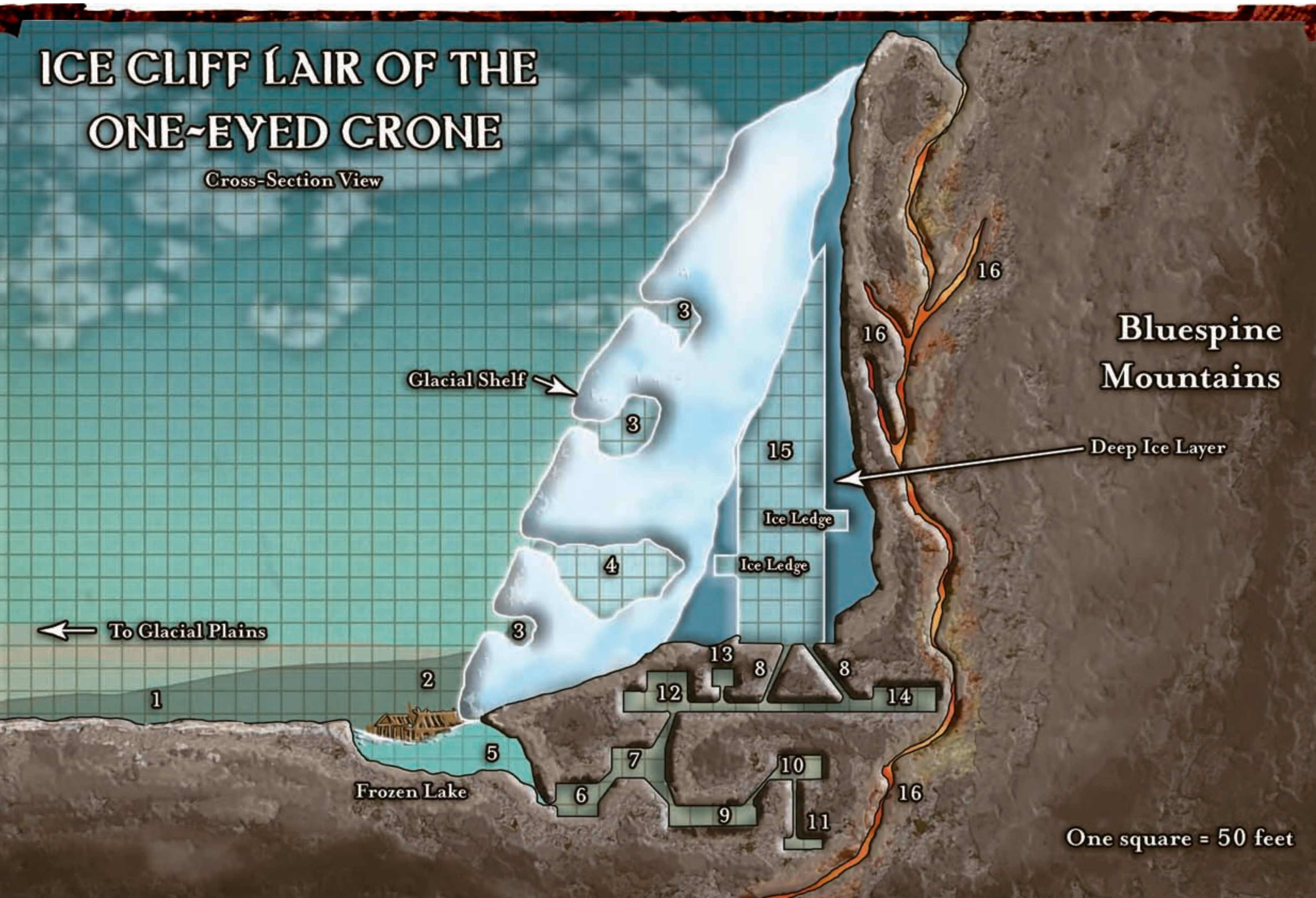
1. Frost Worm Plains: This stretch of treacherous ice is the hunting ground for a Gargantuan (40 HD) frost worm. The distant murmur of the worm's trill pleases Ketheptis while she lounges in her lair. The deterrent the creature poses to intruders is merely a perk. The fact that the frost worm devours Thraalgrum's followers from time to time is as much a source of consternation to the frost giant as it is a source of amusement to Ketheptis.

2. Frost Giant Settlement: In the shadow of the Bluespines, a tribe of frost giants loyal to Thraalgrum built their lodgings. The settlement is a ramshackle collection of enormous longhouses hewn from old-growth trees and ice caves bored into the frozen glacier. DMs using the *Frostburn* supplement can populate this settlement with twenty frost giants, four frost giant maulers, four tundra scouts, and a spirit speaker. Otherwise, replace the last nine creatures with four frost giant jarls.

3. False Entrances: These massive ice caverns are traps baited with impressive carvings of draconic motifs and filled with mountainous piles of drow skeletons. The highest of these caves serves as the frost giants' rookery—several trained giant ravens (*Frostburn* 148) or dire hawks roost there. Twenty remorhazes nest in the connecting cave complexes, viciously attacking intruders. On occasion, remorhazes surge from the caverns to threaten the frost worm below, but they haven't succeeded in killing it yet. These battles are a spectacle not to be missed; Ketheptis often observes them from the sky.

4. Prison of the Living Carnage: This enormous cavern appears completely barren at first glance. Those who turn their gaze upward can make a DC 25 Spot check to notice an enormous mass of blotchy darkness encased behind a thick, frozen ceiling. Within lies a gigantic chaos beast (advanced to 20 HD) slowly nurtured to terrifying proportions by constant exposure to one of Ketheptis potent prizes, a cracked *chaos diamond*. The creature consumes the ice around it slowly over time. Once it has grown large enough, the dragon plans to unleash it in the most populated drow jungles. She looks forward to watching the monstrosity reduce the drow in its wake to quivering masses of jelly.

A strange conical opening lies in the inner recesses of this chamber (Search DC 25). This is the bell of a huge *greater horn of blasting* in Ketheptis's lair below. If Ketheptis notes dangerous intruders in this cave, she can blow her



mighty breath through this horn (subjecting occupants of this area to both her breath weapon and the horn's blasting effect). The blast also unleashes the chaos beast to deal with survivors.

5. Frozen Lake Entrance: This frigid lake is one entry to Ketheptis's underground lair. The lake is well populated with zeugladons (*Frostburn* 120) or cachalot whales. Ketheptis often makes meals of them, but smaller creatures braving the chill depths of the lake could end up on the fearsome beasts' menu instead.

6. Vandragmar's Legion: Visible within the crystalline walls of this chamber, a legion of well-armed drow warriors arrayed in perfect fighting formation stands frozen for all time. Vandragmar, the great warlord of the Golden Carapace Clan, led his followers against Ketheptis long ago. The dragon blasted them with her breath, flash-freezing the foolish drow where they stood. The sight pleased her so much that she had Vandragmar and his legion interred here. Rumor among the drow is that Vandragmar marched to his death willingly after dreaming a prophecy that his legion would one day rise again and cast Ketheptis down. Thraalgrum claims it is folly to keep the cursed legion close at hand, but the One-Eyed Crone mocks the old giant's fear.

7. Chess Room: The even crystal floor of this cavern is paved with alternating dark blue and chalk-white squares of ice. A grim chess set of frost-laden skeletons opposite crisply frozen zombies is arrayed mid-game. Thraalgrum's expertise at the game is one of the few things keeping him alive; Ketheptis enjoys a spirited match now and again. The skeletons and zombies here do not defend themselves. They respond only to called-out chess moves, which send them shambling to their appointed squares.

8. Frozen Maws of Ketheptis: The floors of these long caverns are rife with stalagmites. Rows of icy stalactites loom like giant shark's teeth above. If Ketheptis detects enemies here, she unleashes a shock wave with her tail, bringing stalactites raining down on their heads for 10d6 points of piercing damage (Reflex DC 25 half). Six ice golems (*Frostburn* 137) or stone golem guardians built into the walls of each cavern are activated by the shock wave and immediately attack.

9. Pools of Plague: This sprawling cavern consists largely of pools of magical waste created by Ketheptis's efforts to produce the perfect contagion. The ponds are filled to overflowing with swirling black fog or brackish green ooze, and they are lined with treacherous icy walkways. Even moving at half speed, anyone navigating a walkway must succeed on a DC 25 Balance check (DC 30 if moving at full speed) or tumble into a pool. Anyone falling into a pool is blinded and takes 1d4 points of damage to all ability scores every round as her skin festers, blood boils, eyes melt, and spirit wanes (Fortitude DC 25 negates).

On a central island of solid ice are stored some of Ketheptis's dreadful concoctions. A cauldron of sweet-smelling, reddish brown intoxicant renders any who imbibe it permanently insane (as the *insanity* spell) and subjects it to a continuous *rage* effect (Fortitude DC 20 negates). Another vat brims with a green slime variant that eats skin and bone and paralyzes any humanoid it comes into contact with (Fortitude DC 25 negates). Ketheptis's most promising experiment is a simple tray of fine white powder that renders anyone who comes into contact with it permanently infertile (nothing short of a *miracle* or *wish* reverses this effect). The dragon hopes to create a variant of this powder with which to seed clouds, thus creating a sterilizing rain that will make all drow caught in the storm unable to propagate their hideous race.

10. The Bloodworks: The floor of this chamber is dark red ice, and the sound of dripping liquid echoes from within. The desiccated corpses of dozens of drow hang from the stone ceiling here, horrible exsanguination pumps attached to their veins and arteries. The last few precious drops of their blood spatter upon the center of the chamber. The floor is composed entirely of frozen blood, harvested from hundreds of drow captives.

11. Tomb of Dekaraz: Beneath the Bloodworks rests the frozen coffin of Dekaraz. The Qabralin exile rests here, using his gaseous form ability to seep through a passage filled with porous ice to one of the poison pools in area 9. The vampire can heat the frozen blood above his crypt to recover faster after battle, or to bolster himself with temporary hit points before a fray.

DEKARAZ CR 16

Male vampire elf necromancer 14
LE Medium undead (augmented humanoid)
Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +16, Spot +16
Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Elven, Giant, Mabran

AC 26, touch 20, flat-footed 21
(+5 Dex, +6 natural, +5 deflection)
hp 96 (14 HD); **DR** 10/silver and magic, fast healing 5
Immune undead immunities
Resist cold 10, electricity 10; turn resistance +4
Fort +6, **Ref** +11, **Will** +11

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares); *spider climb*
Melee *+3 frost dagger* +15/+10 (1d4+7 plus 1d6 cold) or slam +12 (1d6+4 plus 2 negative levels)
Base Atk +7; **Grp** +11
Atk Options Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Weapon Finesse, blood drain, energy drain, magic strike
Special Actions children of the night, dominate (DC 21)
Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 14th):
7th—*finger of death* (DC 26), *maximized ice storm, spell turning, waves of exhaustion*
6th—*chain lightning* (DC 25), *eyebite* (DC 25), *maximized vampiric touch* (+11 melee touch), *true seeing*
5th—*blight* (DC 24), *cloudkill* (DC 22), *cone of cold* (DC 22), *prying eyes, teleport*
4th—*bestow curse* (DC 23), *contagion* (DC 23), *enervation* (+12 ranged touch), *fear* (DC 23), *maximized magic missile, stoneskin*
3rd—*arcane sight, dispel magic (2), fireball* (DC 20), *fly, nondetection, vampiric touch* (+11 melee touch)
2nd—*blindness/deafness* (DC 21), *false life, fog cloud, resist energy (fire), see invisibility, spectral hand, spider climb*

1st—*alarm, expeditious retreat, mage armor, magic missile, protection from good, ray of enfeeblement* (+12 ranged touch), *unseen servant*
0—*arcane mark, detect magic, mage hand, touch of fatigue* (+11 melee touch, DC 19)

Abilities Str 19, Dex 20, Con —, Int 24, Wis 15, Cha 18
SQ able to notice secret or concealed doors, alternate form, create spawn, *gaseous form*, summon familiar (none)
Feats Alertness^{B}, Combat Reflexes^{B}, Craft Ring^{B}, Dodge^{B}, Great Fortitude, Greater Spell Focus (necromancy)^{B}, Improved Initiative^{B}, Lightning Reflexes^{B}, Maximize Spell, Mobility, Scribe Scroll^{B}, Spell Focus (necromancy), Weapon Finesse
Skills Bluff +16, Concentration +21, Decipher Script +9, Diplomacy +12, Hide +13, Knowledge (arcana) +24, Knowledge (history) +24, Listen +16, Move Silently +13, Search +17, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +26 (+28 to learn necromantic spells), Spot +16
Possessions *+3 frost dagger, ring of protection +5, ring of counterspells* (*disintegrate*), *headband of intellect +4*
Spellbook spells prepared plus 0, 1st, 2nd—all except enchantment and illusion; 3rd—*gentle repose, halt undead, ray of exhaustion;* 4th—*animate dead*; 5th—*break enchantment, permanency, symbol of sleep, symbol of pain*; 6th—*create undead, globe of invulnerability, symbol of fear*; 7th—*control undead, symbol of weakness*

Magic Strike (Ex) Dekaraz's slam attack is treated as a magic weapon for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

12. Battle Den of Letho: This enormous circular cave resembles a colossal arena. Letho tests his strength against all manner of creatures here. Remorhazes, smilodons, dire polar bears, and other beasts are his usual fare, but at present a twelve-headed cryohydra is shackled here. Letho is happy to let the creature devour PCs who breach his den.

Letho CR 18

Male half-silver dragon frost giant barbarian 7
CE Large dragon
Init –1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +5, Spot +19
Languages Draconic

AC 28, touch 6, flat-footed 28; improved uncanny dodge (–1 size, –1 Dex, +14 armor, +8 natural, –2 rage)
hp 305 (21 HD); **DR** 1/—
Immune cold, paralysis, sleep
Fort +23, **Ref** +7, **Will** +10
Weakness vulnerability to fire

Speed 50 ft. (10 squares), fly 100 ft. (average); Hover
Melee *+3 shocking burst greataxe* +36/+31/+26/+21 (3d6+27 plus 1d6 electricity/19–20/×3 plus 2d10 electricity) and bite +27 (1d8+8) or
Melee 2 claws +32 each (1d6+16) and bite +25 (1d8+8)
Ranged *+2 returning javelins* +19/+13 (1d8+18) or
Ranged rock +15 (2d6+16)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +17; **Grp** +37
Atk Options Cleave, Improved Overrun, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, rage 2/day (12 rounds)
Special Actions breath weapon

Abilities Str 42, Dex 9, Con 28, Int 8, Wis 14, Cha 12
SQ illiteracy, rock catching, trap sense +2
Feats Cleave, Hover, Improved Critical (greataxe), Improved Overrun, Improved Sunder, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greataxe)
Skills Climb +30, Craft (leatherworking) +16, Hide –8, Intimidate +18, Jump +38, Listen +6, Spot +19, Survival +12, Swim +16)
Possessions *+6 mithral full plate, +3 shocking burst greataxe*, 2 *+2 returning javelins*

Breath Weapon (Su) 30-ft. cone, 1/day, 6d8 cold, Reflex DC 26 halves.

When not raging, Letho's stats change as follows:
AC 30, touch 8, flat-footed 30
hp 255
Fort +21, **Will** +8
Melee *+3 shocking burst greataxe* +34/+29/+24/+19 (3d6+21 plus 1d6 electricity/19–20/×3 plus 2d10 electricity) and bite +25 (1d8+7) or
Melee 2 claws +30 each (1d6+14) and bite +25 (1d8+7)
Ranged *+2 returning javelins* +19/+13 (1d8+16) or
Ranged rock +15 (2d6+14)
Grp +35
Abilities Str 38, Con 24
Skills Climb +28, Jump +36, Swim +14
Breath Weapon (Su) Reflex DC 24 half

13. Tomb of Thraalgrum: Letho ordered this majestic tomb built, complete with an ornate sarcophagus. He enjoys taunting his aged father with it, hoping to hasten the old giant into the cold embrace of death.

14. Thraalgrum's Library: Though large, this cramped chamber is packed to bursting with mounds of ancient tomes and shards of old stone tablets. Baasra spends much time here and has setup her own work area—the corpse of a dragonmarked halfling lies stretched on a cruel flaying rack, and three patches of dragonmarked skin are pinned to the wall nearby. Thraalgrum's and Baasra's quarters adjoin this area; they are encountered here unless they have responded to a threat elsewhere in the lair.

Thraalgrum CR 15

Male primordial^{SX} frost giant (venerable) wizard 8/loremaster 3
NE Large giant (cold)
Init +5; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +3, Spot +20
Languages Common, Draconic, Elven, Giant, Riedran, Risian, Terran

AC 28, touch 11, flat-footed 26 (–1 size, +1 Dex, +6 armor, +11 natural, +1 dodge)
hp 193 (25 HD)
Immune cold
Fort +17, **Ref** +9, **Will** +16
Weakness vulnerability to fire

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares)
Melee *+2 flaming burst spell storing heavy mace* +26/+21/+16/+11 (2d6+12 plus 1d6 fire plus 1d10 fire) or

Melee 2 slams +23 each (1d4+7)
Ranged rock or chunk of ice +18/+13/+8/+3 (2d6+7)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +16; **Grp** +27
Atk Options Combat Expertise
Combat Gear *wand of lightning bolt* (30 charges), 2 *potions of cure serious wounds*
Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 11th):
6th—*acid fog, disintegrate* (+17 ranged touch, DC 22)
5th—*dominate person* (DC 21), *magic jar* (DC 21), *teleport*
4th—*charm monster* (DC 20), *phantasmal killer* (DC 20), *scrying, stoneskin*
3rd—*dispel magic* (2), *empowered ray of enfeeblement* (+17 ranged touch), *fireball* (DC 19), *protection from energy*
2nd—*alter self, blindness/deafness* (DC 18), *detect thoughts* (DC 18), *mirror image, resist energy (fire), shatter*
1st—*charm person* (DC 17), *comprehend languages, magic missile, obscuring mist, ray of enfeeblement* (+17 ranged touch), *shield*
0—*arcane mark, detect magic, ghost sound, read magic*
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 15th):
At will—*invisibility*

Abilities Str 24, Dex 12, Con 19, Int 22, Wis 16, Cha 14
SQ dodge trick, lore, magical knack, rock catching, summon familiar (none), weapon trick
Feats Brew Potion, Combat Expertise, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Empower Spell, Extend Spell^B, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Scribe Scroll^B, Skill Focus (history), Weapon Focus (heavy mace)
Skills Appraise +6, Climb +19, Concentration +18, Craft (alchemy) +28, Decipher Script +10, Diplomacy +12, Gather Information +12, Heal +9, Hide –3, Intimidate +12, Jump +19, Knowledge (arcana) +31, Knowledge (history) +19, Knowledge (architecture and engineering) +16, Listen +3, Search +6 (+8 secret doors and similar compartments), Spellcraft +18 (+20 decipher scrolls), Spot +20, Use Magic Device +17 (+21 scrolls)
Possessions *bracers of armor +6, +2 flaming burst spell storing heavy mace, amulet of natural armor +2, cloak of displacement, ring of spell turning*
Spellbook spells prepared plus 0, 1st—all; 2nd—*arcane lock, blur, see invisibility, spider climb, summon monster II*; 3rd—*halt undead, hold person, heroism, tongues;* 4th—*scrying, greater invisibility;* 5th—*prying eyes*

Magical Knack (Ex) Primordial giants use all spell-like abilities at +1 caster level.

BAASRA CR 19

Female half-silver dragon frost giant sorcerer 8
NE Large dragon
Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +4, Spot +21
Languages Common, Draconic, Elven, Giant, Risian, Terran, Mabran

AC 29, touch 10, flat-footed 28
(–1 size, +1 Dex, +6 armor, +13 natural)
hp 211 (22 HD)
Immune cold, paralysis, sleep
Fort +17, **Ref** +8, **Will** +16
Weakness vulnerability to fire

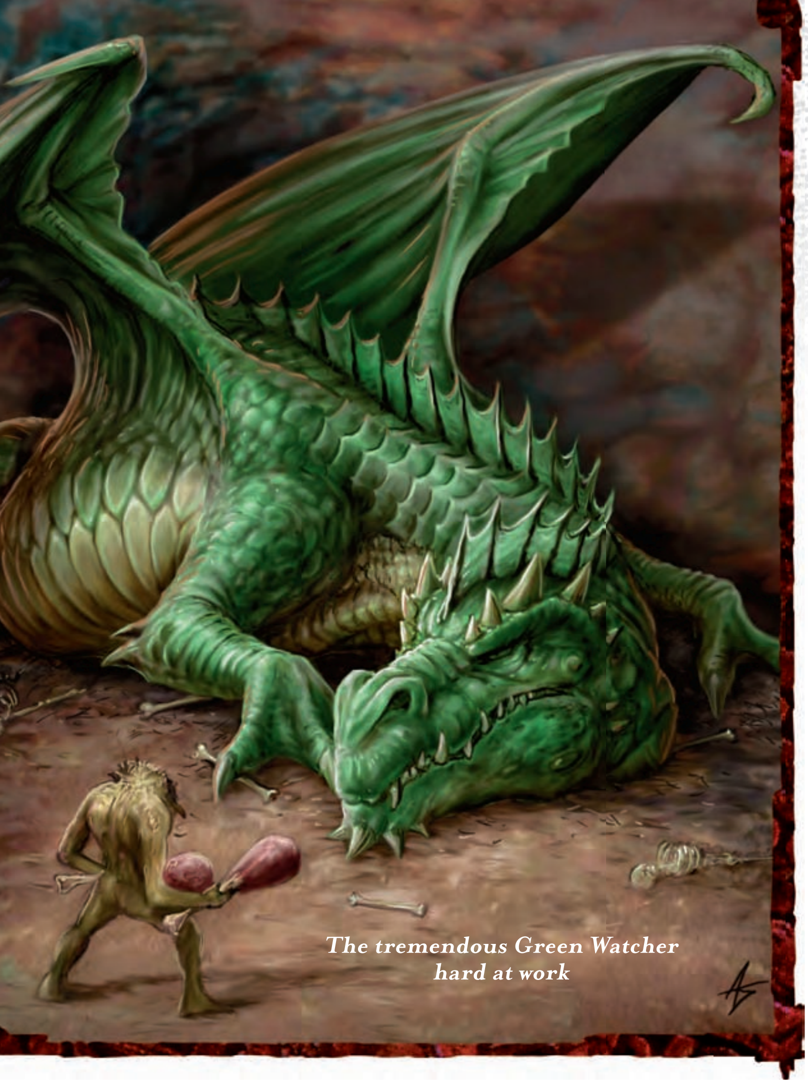
Speed 40 ft. (8 squares), fly 80 ft. (average); Hover
Melee 2 claws +25 each (1d6+12) and bite +20 (1d8+7)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +14; **Grp** +27
Atk Options Empower Spell
Special Actions breath weapon
Combat Gear scroll of *globe of invulnerability*
Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 8th, 1d20+12 to overcome SR):
4th (4/day)—*polymorph*
3rd (6/day)—*dispel magic, lightning bolt* (DC 19)
2nd (7/day)—*invisibility, scorching ray* (+22 ranged touch), *see invisibility*
1st (8/day)—*charm person* (DC 17), *comprehend languages, magic missile, protection from good, shield*
0 (6/day)—*acid splash* (+22 ranged touch), *arcane mark, detect magic, detect poison, ghost sound, mage hand, message, read magic*

Abilities Str 28, Dex 12, Con 20, Int 21, Wis 18, Cha 23
SQ rock catching, summon familiar (none)
Feats Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Craft Wondrous Item, Empower Spell, Greater Spell Penetration, Hover, Iron Will, Spell Penetration
Skills Appraise +5 (+7 alchemical), Bluff +22, Climb +26, Concentration +21 (+25 casting defensively), Craft (alchemy) +30, Decipher Script +17 (+19 scrolls), Diplomacy +18, Disguise +6 (+8 acting), Hide –3, Intimidate +18, Jump +26, Knowledge (arcana) +21, Knowledge (history) +17, Listen +4, Sense Motive +16, Spellcraft +23, Spot +21, Use Magic Device +9
Possessions *bracers of armor +6, amulet of mighty fists +3*

Breath Weapon (Su) 30-ft. cone, 1/day, damage 6d8 cold, Reflex DC 22 half.

15. Glacial Nexus: Glacial light shimmers through a ceiling of one-way translucent ice in this high-domed cavern of tremendous size. Sheer, slick walls weeping condensation ascend to several large alcoves above, where Ketheptis takes her respite. Her hoard is frozen hundreds of feet into the deep ice below this cavern. If threatened in her lair, Ketheptis brings avalanches of ice down upon her foes from above with her powerful tail. If anyone ascends to threaten her in her elevated ice caves, she employs a wingstorm to buffet them against the walls or cast them down to the floor below.

16. Magma Vents: Ketheptis's glacial lair clings to a dormant volcano, and the rivers of magma flowing near the dragon's domain vent searing gas high above at the mountain's summit. Her abode is a stunning feat of architecture and nature: The entire stronghold is constructed so that by striking a specific point with her shock wave, Ketheptis can initiate a chain reaction of small quakes and cause an eruption. Thus, she can destroy her entire lair (and anyone in it) at any time if she so wishes. If her life is seriously threatened in her inner sanctum, she does not hesitate triggering a fiery cataclysm to consume her foes.



The tremendous Green Watcher hard at work

ZARTARXIS

"The mistakes of our past must remain there. Your mission is one of great import, Zartarxis. Uphold it with honor. The giants must never rise again. We know you will stand vigilant."

—Bexraktosar, Golden Eye of Chronepsis

Deep in the fetid jungles between the eastern head of the Hydra and the ruins of Bazek Mohl lies the domain of the Green Watcher. Since the fall of their empire, the giants have struggled to rise from the ashes and regain their lost glory. The Eyes of Chronepsis have no wish to see the dragons' greatest folly once again grow mighty. This guardian keeps close eye on the giant rabble should the powerful Du'rashka Tul curse falter, and monitors the incursions of those who probe the forsaken continent's ruins in search of artifacts of fell power.

The post of the Green Watcher has passed from dragon to dragon for thousands of years, usually from old bloodlines of green dragons. Being chosen to take up the mantle of the Watcher is a great honor to some; to others, it is a tedious task of lonesome exile. Many have shirked their duties in the past, but the current Watcher is the laziest yet.

Zartarxis quickly grew to despise his post. The jungle environs are vermin-infested and uncomfortable. The dismal ruins of the giants remind him of his race's fallibility and emphasize his solitude. To make matters worse, the dragon finds it nigh-impossible to locate worthy slaves. The jumpy denizens of the forsaken continent either flee at his approach or savagely attack, forcing him to reduce the insolent creatures to splotches of acid-ruined flesh.

After a few decades of trying to make the best of his situation, Zartarxis succumbed to utter ennui. He has since given sloth a new name. The green dragon rarely leaves the comfort of his lair, forcing his minions to bring him meals, freshen up the scented leaves of his den, and occasionally even turn him on his hoard.

The reclamation efforts of the Domains of Purity and the Scriveners of the Sky (*SX* 60) have made frightening advances on Zartarxis's watch, to say nothing of the increase in giant relics garnered by Khorvairian expeditions launched from Stormreach. In fact, Stormreach itself sneaked up on Zartarxis. The green dragon doesn't remember it being there when he took up his post, and he was shocked when news of this teeming city and the many explorers now surveying giant ruins pierced his sleep-addled brain.

Zartarxis is not the only one shocked at the severity of his negligence. Several among the Eyes of Chronepsis, upon learning of his lassitude, grew unsettled and paid him a visit. Roused now by shame and fear of the repercussions the Eyes promised if his torpor continues, Zartarxis has resumed his neglected duties. The numbers of missing expeditions are on the rise in recent months—all victims of the Green Watcher's rekindled purpose.

DESCRIPTION

Centuries of inactivity have left their mark on Zartarxis. Years of gorging himself on meals delivered right to his maw have fattened him to a state of obesity nearly beyond belief. Zartarxis's green scales stretch taut over his girth, and stumpy limbs peek out from his plump body. The dragon's face droops, and his lidded eyes are little more than slits, lending him an air of perpetual sleepiness.

Zartarxis rarely bothers to clean his scales or even order his minions to do so. Muck, leaves, and the rotting remains of crushed enemies settle in hard-to-reach places. In flight, his wings beat fiercely to keep his girth aloft.

MINIONS

In the first few decades of his stay, Zartarxis managed to subjugate a tribe of trolls who now worship him, calling the dragon the Great Green God. The tribe's leader, the God's Huntmaster, is a troll ranger (*MM* 247) named Maarg'jarth. The Huntmaster is a towering specimen with dark mottled skin, whose drooping nose dangles far past his chin. Maarg'jarth is responsible for capturing meals of appropriate size to satisfy his master's immense appetite. When he fails to do so (which is often), Zartarxis eats one of Maarg'jarth's limbs, then watches the troll writhe in anguish as he painfully regenerates it.

A few decades back, Zartarxis gained a useful servant in Katress, a spirit naga. Katress has long ruled over a clan of poison dusk lizardfolk, but her minions were constantly harried by the trolls under Zartarxis's control. The spirit naga approached the Great Green

God and promised to take care of the daily upkeep of his domain, allowing him to sink even deeper into slothfulness. Zartarxis happily agreed. Now Katress flaunts her position as Speaker of the God, taking great delight in bullying the trolls. Maarg'jarth wishes nothing more than to slay the naga, but he dares not incur Zartarxis's wrath.

ALLIES AND ENEMIES

Prior to the Eyes' recent visit, Zartarxis's enemies were few. Even though he loathes other creatures, his slothfulness makes it difficult for him to pursue an active agenda of hate. A more perfect example of the age-old adage of "let sleeping dragons lie" is hard to find. If any creature disturbs his rest, or worse, forces him to actually do his job by venturing into forbidden ruins and uncovering artifacts, Zartarxis's resultant rage knows no bounds. He has learned to hate adventurers and explorers above all. Aside from the disturbance these meddlesome creatures visit upon his rest, he finds the very principle of spirited exploration distasteful. Zartarxis exalts sloth and apathy to an ideological supreme, and to him any creature that would willingly journey far and wide seeking "adventure" is an abomination.

Zartarxis's recent wrath is often borne by the giants. Frustrated beyond measure by the Eyes of Chronepsis's reproach, the green dragon takes out his anger on the Domains of Purity and the Scriveners of the Sky, blaming his plight on them. The dragon takes pleasure in tearing apart any giant who wanders too close to his domain. Most organized tribes of giants are now intimately aware of the Green Watcher. Though staggered at first by his sudden surge of activity, they now plot the green dragon's demise.

HOOKS

Simply by braving the giant ruins, or any adventure locations detailed earlier in this chapter, the PCs could draw the wrath of Zartarxis. Other possible hooks include:

Relic Refuse: Several potent items of magical might and important relics connected to the giants' legacy are discarded in the refuse pit of Zartarxis's lair. PCs seeking a specific item could be forced to look for it there.

Food for the God: Maarg'jarth knows well his master's hate of explorers and often brings them to the dragon alive, hoping this special treat will curry favor. The PCs are set upon by the trolls and dragged back to the Green Watcher's lair. They must devise an escape plan before Zartarxis awakens and they become breakfast.

Treat with the Dragon: An organization whose expeditions have lately been vanishing down Zartarxis's throat hires the party to parley with the Great Green God. The PCs must ascertain what appeasement he requires to cease the attacks. If they can't reach an agreement, they face the daunting task of slaying the dragon.

Spies of the Eyes: PCs might be manipulated into spying on the Green Watcher by agents of the Chamber, or even by the Eyes of Chronepsis. They are asked to monitor the Green Watcher's performance of his duties and subtly find ways to break his lethargy. Prodding Zartarxis to action and provoking his fury are practically the same thing, making this mission extremely dangerous.

ZARTARXIS, THE GREAT GREEN GOD CR 13

Male adult green dragon
N Huge dragon
Init –2; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., keen senses; Listen +17, Spot +17
Languages Common, Draconic, Giant
Aura frightful presence (180 ft., DC 25)

AC 25, touch 6, flat-footed 25
(–2 size, –2 Dex, +19 natural)
hp 270 (20 HD); **DR** 5/magic
Immune acid, paralysis, sleep
SR 21
Fort +19, **Ref** +10, **Will** +14

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares), fly 100 ft. (clumsy), swim 40 ft.
Melee bite +29 (3d8+10) and
2 claws +23 each (2d6+5) and
2 wings +23 each (1d8+5) and
tail slap +23 (2d6+15)
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (15 ft. with bite)
Base Atk +20; **Grp** +38
Atk Options Clinging Breath, Improved Overrun, Large and in Charge, Maximize Breath, Power Attack, magic strike
Special Actions breath weapon, crush 2d8+15 (DC 29)
Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 5th):
2nd (5/day)—*invisibility, obscure object*
1st (8/day)—*charm person* (DC 16), *mage armor, shield, sleep* (DC 16)
0 (6/day)—*detect magic, detect poison, mage hand, message, open/close, read magic*
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th):
3/day—*suggestion* (DC 18)

Abilities Str 30, Dex 6, Con 24, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 20
SQ grossly obese, water breathing
Feats Clinging Breath^{Dr}, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Improved Overrun, Large and in Charge^{Dr}, Maximize Breath^{Dr}, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bite)
Skills Bluff +25, Concentration +14, Diplomacy +14, Disguise +5 (+7 acting), Hide –10, Intimidate +30, Jump +14, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Knowledge (history) +11, Knowledge (nature) +6, Listen +17, Move Silently +8, Search +10, Sense Motive +20, Speak Language (Common), Spellcraft +13, Spot +17, Survival +2 (+4 in aboveground environments or following tracks), Swim +24
Possessions *ring of mind shielding*, pale lavender *ioun stone* (12 levels left).

Magic Strike (Ex) Zartarxis's natural attacks are treated as magic weapons for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Breath Weapon (Su) 50-ft. cone, once every 1d4 rounds, damage 12d6 acid, Reflex DC 27 half.

Clinging Breath At Zartarxis's option, creatures affected by his breath weapon take half the original damage dealt to them in the following round. Doing so adds 1 to the number of rounds Zartarxis must wait before using his breath weapon again. As a full-round action, affected creatures can make a DC 27 Reflex save to scrape off the clinging breath before taking damage.

Grossly Obese (Ex) Zartarxis's corpulence inhibits his flight (noted above). In addition, Zartarxis can employ only one wing and one claw attack against any single Medium or smaller target in melee. Because of his tremendous girth, the dragon is considered Gargantuan for the purpose of a bull rush, crush, or overrun attack.

Large and in Charge When Zartarxis makes an attack of opportunity against an opponent moving inside his threatened area, he can force the opponent back to the 5-foot space it was in before it provoked the attack. Make an opposed Strength check; Zartarxis gains a +4 bonus for each size category larger than his opponent he is and a +1 bonus for every 5 points of damage he dealt on the attack.

Maximize Breath If Zartarxis uses his breath weapon as a full-round action, the damage is maximized (72 points), but doing so adds 3 to the number of rounds he must wait before using his breath weapon again.

SANCTUM OF THE WATCHER

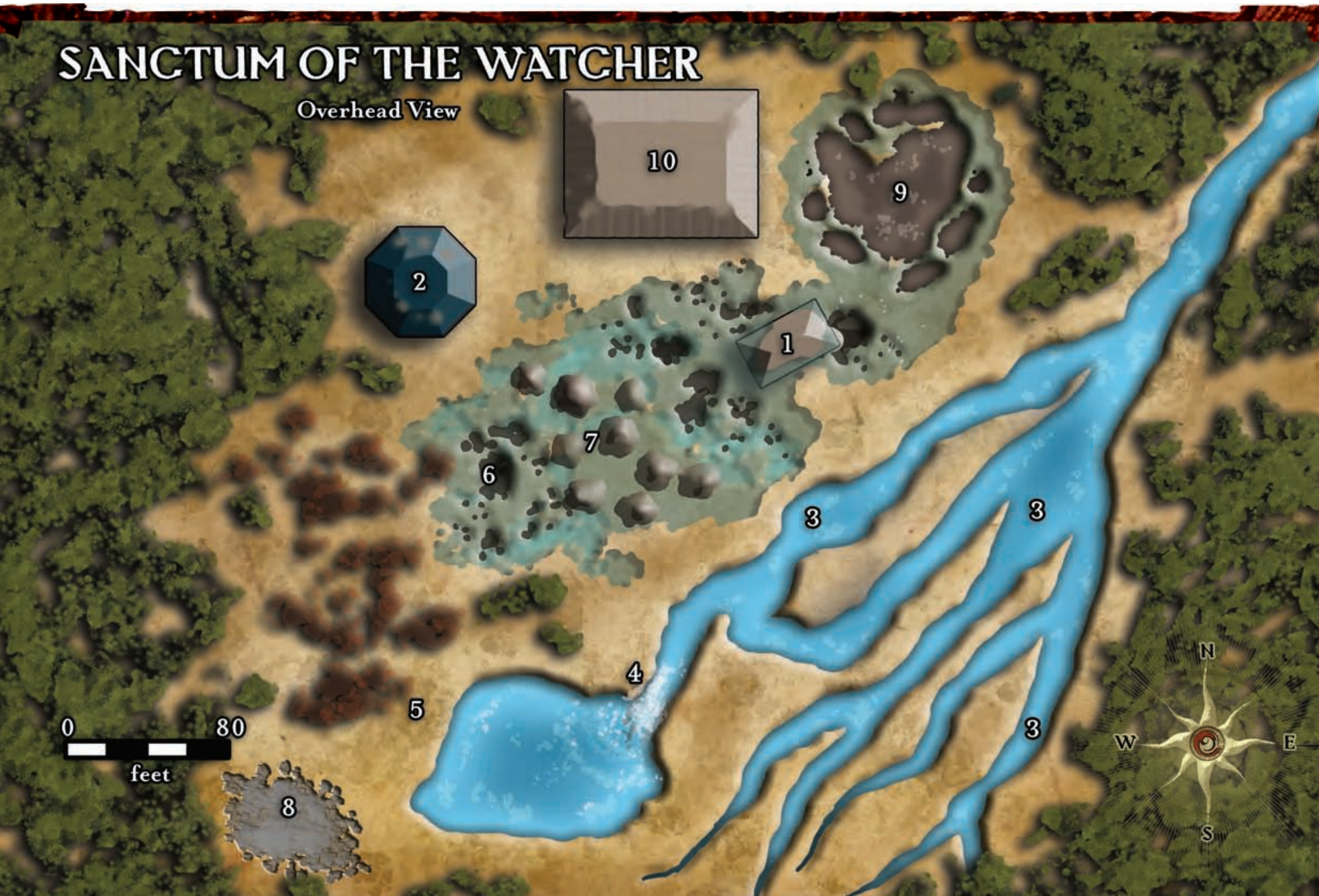
Deep in the jungle, a crystal river slices through a damp patch of mist-shrouded bog. The Green Watcher waits within. Long ago, this sanctum served as the seat of power for dragon patrons of the giants, whence mighty wyrms dispensed justice and kept a watchful eye over their vassals. The sanctuary fell into ruin after the dragons' departure, but it was restored to its former glory years later by the first Green Watcher and was well cared for until Zartarxis's arrival. Under the Great Green God's custody, it has regressed to little more than a half-sunken ruin choked by vines and marsh gas.

Keyed Locations

The following features correspond to numbered areas on the map.

1. Hall of Judgment: This enormous marble edifice ornamented with traces of mithral and silver bears the visages of the Sovereigns, gazing northwest toward the faraway shores of Argonnessen. Here, the dragon overlords of old Xen'drik passed judgment and took council with the mightiest of titans. During Zartarxis's reign, the hall sank into the marsh. Now the Sovereigns' snouts are immersed in the sucking bog, and the silver spire atop the hall juts out of the marsh at a skewed angle. The interior walls were once draped with several massive tapestries of exquisite quality. Now the draperies are little more than damp, rotten cloth. When the Eyes paid Zartarxis their unscheduled visit, the first sign of the Green Watcher's negligence was the discouraging sight of the half-submerged Hall of Judgment.

2. Watcher's Eye: This enormous obsidian tower ascends high into the firmament like a black blade piercing the cloudline. It was used by past Green Watchers to survey the ever-changing wilds of Xen'drik and to spot signs of developing civilization across the land. Until recently, the only inhabitants for the past century have been birds, their passing noted by the large quantity of spattered droppings. A pair of mated



wyverns recently moved in, their nest of dried tallgrass sprouting from the observation windows at the pinnacle. The wyverns jealously guard their clutch of three eggs.

3. Heads of the Hydra: These many tributaries of the eastern branch of the Hydra account for the area's marshy terrain. Several large grottoes clawed from their banks are home to some twenty scrags (*MM* 248), all loyal worshipers of the Great Green God. The aquatic trolls patrol these rivers, capturing or killing creatures foolish enough to violate Zartarxis's domain.

4. Naga's Waterfall: The largest tributary of the Hydra plunges over a rocky outcropping here, becoming a curtain of cascading water. Behind the waterfall is a small cavern that Katress calls home. Within she stores her meager hoard, appropriated from tribute meant for Zartarxis: a sapphire-studded golden idol of a scorpion (600 gp), six jade bracelets (worn as body ornaments by the naga, worth 50 gp each), a silver hair ornament carved in the shape of a crane (100 gp), and bat-winged *bracers of greater archery* (she just likes the way they look).

5. Red Meadow: Gore-spattered leaves and crimson earth decorate this grim stretch of riverbank. Here, Maarg'jarth prepares his kills for Zartarxis's maw. The dragon can't be bothered to crunch bones anymore and forces the trolls to fillet his meals. The river runs red downstream of this meadow, and the stench of carrion wafts on the air. Enormous chunks of meat hang from thick vines; their dripping blood leaves the entire area slick. Anyone moving at full speed or engaging in combat must succeed on a DC 25 Balance check each round or fall prone in a puddle of entrails and gore. Clouds of flies, murders of crows, and the occasional dire vulture vie for the least tender scraps of meat. At the edge of the meadow, trolls work day and night grinding bones into fine white powder. This chalky bone dust, mixed with special herbs gathered from the forest, is enjoyed as snuff by Zartarxis.

6. Troll Fens: These reeking bogs are home to the Great Green God's faithful tribe. Over forty trolls lurk among the fetid swamp land.

7. Lizardfolk Mudbarrows: Bulbous mounds of slick mud are the homes of lizardfolk loyal to Katress. Within are a series of cramped warrens, where thirty poison dusk lizardfolk and their four war chiefs reside (*MM3* 97 or *DMG* 115). Occasionally a few lizardfolk disappear into the hungry jaws of the nearby trolls; the next day a family of trolls appears floating downriver, bloated with poison. Hostilities often escalate until Katress and Maarg'jarth are forced to step in. The enmity between the trolls and lizardfolk might be exploited by canny PCs seeking entry to (or escape from) the Green Watcher's domain.

8. Refuse Pit: The denizens of the sanctum discard their waste in this large crater filled with murky bog water. Zartarxis carelessly lobbed several notable relics of precataclysm giant civilization into this filth-ridden pool.

9. Mud Marsh: On occasion, Zartarxis enjoys a nice bath in this huge expanse of cool mud. He demands his subjects keep it free of debris and filth at all times, just in case the urge to settle in strikes him.

10. The Sanctum Sanctorum: At the center of this domed pool of crystal-clear water (painstakingly kept clean by troll and lizardfolk worshipers) sits an enormous pile of scented leaves. Here lies Zartarxis. The obese menace passes months without bothering to shift his girth. He demands his minions turn him on occasion (and more than one lizardfolk has been crushed in the process). A small semicircular dais of stone extends along the surface of the pool near the entrance; worshipers (or those foolish enough to request an audience) pay their respects here. Several discolored splotches stain this marble dais, grim reminders of those who incurred Zartarxis's displeasure and were reduced to puddles by his caustic breath.

ADVENTURES IN XEN'DRIK

The following adventures could be found on the continent of Xen'drik.

LOST SCION

Any Level

When the son of a powerful member of House Tharashk secretly leaves his family's enclave to brave the dangers of Xen'drik's interior, it is up to the PCs to return him home safely. Larmok ir'Tharashk is not on a joyride through the jungle, however. Plagued by strange dreams, the young half-orc heads for the Oasis of Blood, urged on by his secret tryst with an aberrant-marked elf beauty named Terina. Larmok's dreams are manufactured by Terina, who plans to sacrifice her lover on the *altar of blood* and gain unthinkable power. The murderous elf plans to rise high in the assassin House Tarkanan (*Sh* 154), then avenge the slaughter of her family during the War of the Mark.

HOOKS

Here are a couple of suggestions for involving the PCs.

Finders Lost: Larmok is first in line for his family's seat in Stormreach, and the eldest of his siblings, named Kitan, is happy he fled. Larmok's youngest brother, Mekrin, realizing that Kitan is sending Finders Guild teams on wild-goose chases, secretly hires the PCs to bring his brother back.

Aberrant Lady: One of the PCs or an associate of theirs has crossed paths with Terina before, and now they hunt her for other crimes committed in the name of House Tarkanan (*Sh* 154).

SITES

The Oasis of Blood (page 142) is ideal for this adventure.

ADVENTURE

The party must track down Larmok. If they interrogate his servants, they learn of his secret love affair with Terina, as well as the pair's flight to the Oasis of Blood. The party must venture into the dread desert of Menechtarun and brave the swirling crimson sands surrounding the oasis. Finally, when they reach the White Ziggurat, they must avert Larmok's sacrifice and capture or slay Terina.

1. Into the Desert: After interrogating Larmok's personal servant, a sniveling half-orc named Gulbreg, the PCs journey to Menechtarun and brave its fierce denizens on the long road to the Oasis of Blood.

Suggested Encounters: The *Sandstorm* supplement provides a number of encounters appropriate to any party level. Otherwise, consider using a band of gnoll slavers or jann accompanied by a pack of howlers or dust mephits, as well as their efreeti master and his lamia consort.

2. Blood Sacrifice: The PCs reach the swirling sands around the oasis and must navigate the perilous storm and the undead who lurk there. When they arrive, they face a bloodthirsty Terina bent on sacrificing Larmok on the *altar of blood*.

Suggested Encounters: Terina is an aberrant dragonmarked sorcerer or blood magus (*CAr* 26).

3. Sibling Rivalry: With Larmok's sacrifice averted, the PCs believe the worst is behind them, but Kitan ir'Tharashk wants his older brother to stay missing. He dispatches operatives to eliminate Larmok and the PCs before they return.

Suggested Encounters: Kitan's agents include NPCs with appropriate levels and classes drawn from the *DMG*, bounty hunters (*DMG2* 163), or any of the rival adventurers detailed in *Secrets of Xen'drik*.

REWARDS

If Larmok is returned to Stormreach unharmed, the PCs earn a valuable ally in House Tharashk. Larmok might see to it that the party is rewarded with dragonshards or magic items. He could also grant them special writs allowing them to demand protection and care from any members of House Tharashk in Stormreach or the Xen'drik interior.

TOOTH OF THE DRAGON

Any Level

Two gold dragon brothers bear a tragic tale. Jarldraz was devoted to the Chamber's purpose, but his sibling Karzrov is a sinister double agent in the employ of the Chamber's secret enemy—Zenobaal. The brothers shared the love of another member of the Chamber, a beautiful silver dragon named Vatriss. Karzrov's heart turned black with jealous rage, and he sent his brother Jarldraz on a mission to Xen'drik, taking measures to ensure the young dragon met his demise there. Jarldraz's tragic death pushed Vatriss into Karzrov's embrace (as he planned), but soon the duplicitous gold dragon intends to betray his silver consort and her beloved Chamber just as he did his brother. Dragons do not die easily, though, and when Jarldraz perished, his spirit lingered on in one of his teeth.

HOOKS

One of the following might be used to introduce the PCs to the adventure.

Chamber's Agents: The PCs are hired by Vatriss or another member of the Chamber to recover Jarldraz's remains so that his spirit might rest easy.

Dreams of the Dragon: One of the PCs who bears a dragonmark, or some other connection to dragonkind, experiences strange dreams in which a gold dragon cries out for vengeance. In her dreams, she sees flashes of the dragon's death, and she is drawn to investigate his demise.

SITES

If the party is low-level, Jarldraz could be the skeleton detailed in the Dragon's Demise section of the Abandoned Orrery (page 138). For a higher-level party, Karzrov dispatched his brother to the Oasis of Blood (page 142) or Darkfire Crater (page 138) on a doomed mission. Karzrov's agents might seek either to destroy Jarldraz' tooth in the superheated magma of the

Devil's Cauldron (high-level; page 139), or hide it in the Dragons' Boneyard (lower-level; page 140).

ADVENTURE

The PCs must first brave the alleys of Stormreach to find Karzrov's agent, a scurrilous wererat named Yulo, who sent Jarldraz on a fool's errand. After interrogating Yulo, the party heads into Xen'drik's interior and locates Jarldraz. Once they find the gold dragon's remains and discover his tooth (now an intelligent magic dagger), agents of Karzrov catch up with them, steal the tooth, and make for Darkfire Crater (where they intend to destroy it in the Devil's Cauldron) or the Dragons' Boneyard (to lose it among the remains of hundreds of dragons). The PCs must retrieve the tooth and defeat Karzrov's minions, eventually even facing the gold dragon himself.

1. Sewers of Stormreach: The PCs track Yulo to the shadowed alleys of the fish market quarter. The wererat flees into the sewers, and a desperate chase through the muck ensues.

The PCs interrogate the wily wererat to learn where Jarldraz went. If they are particularly persuasive, they learn that Yulo was under orders to mislead the gold dragon, though the wererat does not know who paid him to do so.

Suggested Encounters: Carrion crawlers, chokers, and a foul-tempered chuul infest the sewers, along with swarms of rats under Yulo's command. Yulo could be a member of the Bilge Rats (*SX* 19) or have allied himself with a group of sahuagin raiders. He might work for skum agents of Xoriat who scout the sewers as a possible invasion point.

2. Jarldraz's Grave: The PCs' journey to the place where Jarldraz met his end is fraught with the usual perils of Xen'drik's savage countryside. On reaching the site, the party must face the challenges and obstacles within.

Suggested Encounters: The PCs encounter drow, giants, dinosaurs, or other vicious monsters on the way to the adventure site. *Secrets of Xen'drik* details many encounters.

3. Toothnapped!: Agents of the evil gold dragon have been shadowing the PCs. They snatch the tooth from the party and rush off to destroy it. Either the minions' abilities allow them to steal Jarldraz's tooth, or they simply abscond with it before the PCs arrive, leaving a group to ambush the party (no loose ends). Interrogation of captured foes reveals where the thieves intend to dispose of the tooth.

Suggested Encounters: Karzrov's minions include NPCs with appropriate levels and classes drawn from the *DMG* or any of the rival adventurers, yuan-ti, or drow parties detailed in *Secrets of Xen'drik*.

4. Final Showdown: The PCs rush to the next adventure location (Darkfire Crater or the Boneyard) in hot pursuit of Karzrov's thieves. When they arrive, the PCs attempt to recover the tooth. Karzrov himself appears if his minions fail, seeking to end his brother once and for all, and to eliminate the PCs before they spread word of his evil plans.

Suggested Encounters: Select an appropriate age for Karzrov, who can have class levels or be joined by minions to create a more dynamic final battle.

REWARDS

If the PCs save the spirit of Jarldraz and slay or expose his evil brother, they earn Vatriss's (and the Chamber's) favor. Jarldraz vows to serve them as a powerful magic dagger for the rest of their days. He might also bequeath a hefty portion of his hoard to the party in gratitude for avenging his death. The party could also earn the enmity of Zenobaal, setting up the mighty dragon as a dangerous nemesis for future adventures.

Edge of Devouring Darkness

Mid-Level or High-Level

When dragon and giant stood side by side against fiendish threats, powerful artifacts were entrusted to the titan lords of Xen'drik. After the cataclysm, the dragons turned their back on giantkind and reclaimed these gifts so that they would never fall into the wrong hands. All but one—a mighty obsidian longsword named *Ebony's Edge*. The *Edge* tasted the blood of thousands of demons and devils, and more than a few rakshasa overlords in its time. Before the cataclysm, the blade was sundered. With its power undone, the dragons never bothered to claim it after the giant empire fell.

One of the artifact's two pieces, a jagged short sword called *Blackshard*, recently came into the possession of an evil warlock named Sarakel Darkeye the Fiend-Wearer. Sarakel plans to reforge the broken blade in the fires of Devil's Cauldron, and with this dread artifact in his grasp, bring doom wherever he treads.

HOOKS

One of the following might be used to entice the PCs into this adventure.

Revenge on Darkeye: *Blackshard* belonged to a patron or friend of the party. Sarakel broke into that person's estate and slew him before absconding with the short sword.

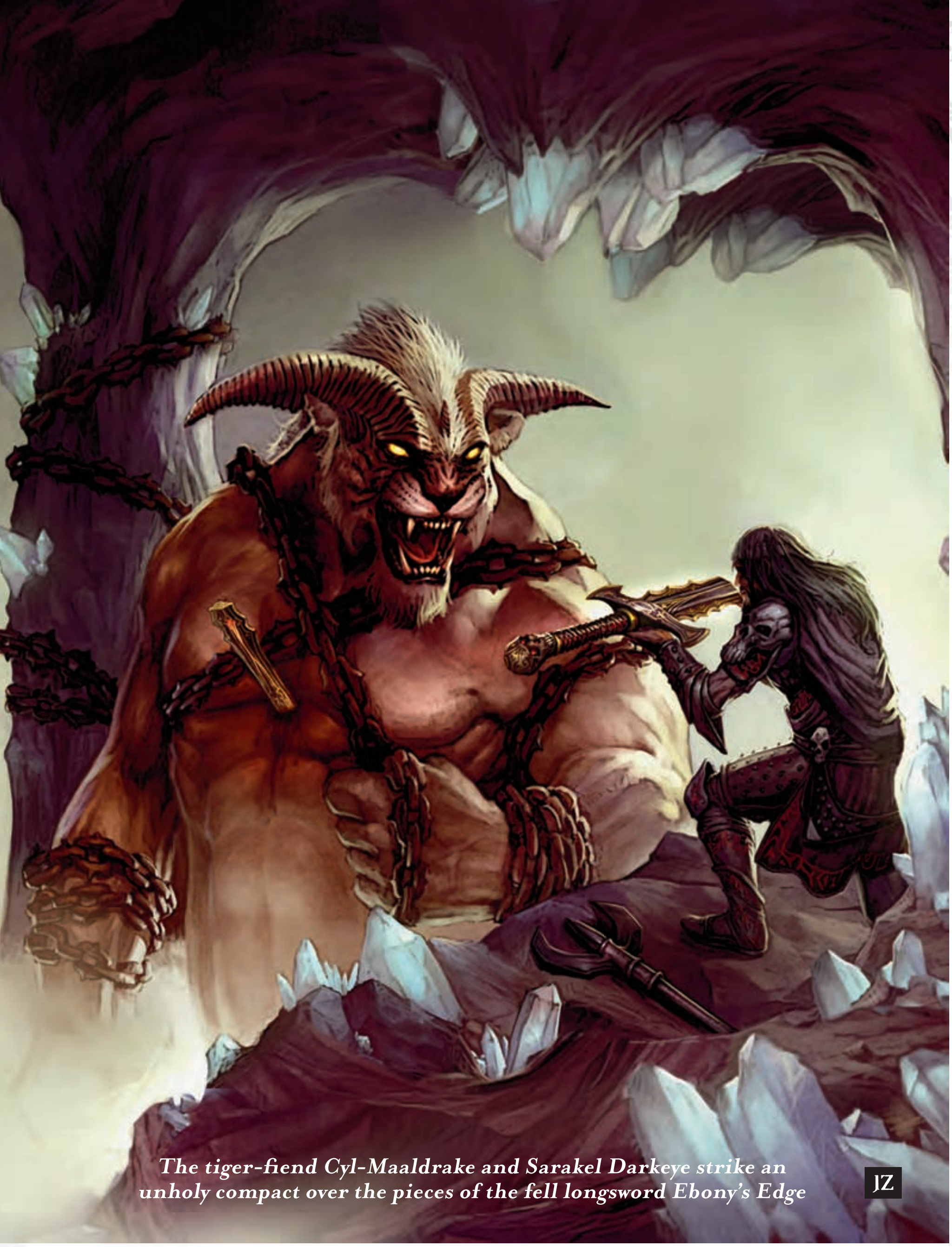
Loremaster's Dread: One of the PCs or a contact has recovered an ancient tablet or tome detailing the dreaded *Ebony's Edge*, and learns that one of its two pieces has been claimed by Sarakel. The tablet or tome speaks of certain doom if the artifact is reforged.

SITES

The Darkfire Crater (page 138) is perfect for this adventure. For an campaign that is larger in scope, begin by having the PCs travel to another site to learn the location of the remaining piece of *Ebony's Edge*.

ADVENTURE

Before they can find Sarakel, the party must learn the location of the broken blade. The lore of *Ebony's Edge* does not bode well for the party, revealing that the blade was sundered while embedded in the back of a great tiger-fiend named Cyl-Maaldrake during a titanic battle. The party then heads to Darkfire Crater to face Cyl-Maaldrake and retrieve the other half of the blade. If they arrive too late, Darkeye has already made a terrible compact with the fiend, promising to free him in exchange for the blade buried in his



The tiger-fiend Cyl-Maaldrake and Sarakel Darkeye strike an unholy compact over the pieces of the fell longsword Ebony's Edge

back. Then the PCs must face Sarakel, potentially armed with *Ebony's Edge*, as well as Cyl-Maaldrake and his loyal servitors.

1. Lost Edge: If they have access to it, powerful divination magic reveals the location of the other piece of the *Edge*. To make the hunt for this information more interesting, dragons might have obscured all knowledge concerning precataclysm artifacts with epic magic, and the only way to track down this lore is to consult the *council of skulls* (page 141) or find a lost tablet in the Underblood Tunnels of the Oasis of Blood (page 144).

Suggested Encounters: Sarakel could send fiendish agents against the PCs if he learns they are out to foil his plan. Any number of demons, devils, or rakshasas might harry the party's travel or ambush the PCs onsite.

2. Assault on Darkfire: The PCs rush to Darkfire Crater, where they face Sarakel (and if Sarakel's agents slowed them, also the liberated Cyl-Maaldrake and his hellish servitors). The PCs could organize the Darkwatcher drow, and possibly even recruit Zartarxis (page 152) or others with a vested interest in seeing *Ebony's Edge* destroyed, in an all-out assault on the Crater. Another approach is to infiltrate Darkfire and its many dangers to face Sarakel and the tiger-fiend and destroy the artifact.

Suggested Encounters: Include nasty foes from the *Fiendish Codex* series if you have these books. Sarakel is particularly dangerous as a warlock/acolyte of the skin^{CM} or a wizard/thaumaturgist. If reforged in Devil's Cauldron, *Ebony's Edge* is a challenge in itself. The blade now possesses a fiendish ego that corrupts those who seek its destruction.

REWARDS

Destroying *Ebony's Edge* earns the gratitude of powerful draconic patrons and proves the party's worthiness. The dragons might even entrust the PCs with powerful magic weapons (up to 150,000 gp value) or even minor artifacts, as they once did the giants.

WEATHER THE STORM

Mid-Level or High-Level

Long has Stormreach survived in the shadow of the wild continent. Over the years, it has repelled attacks by sahuagin, drow, and giants. But when a blue dragon named Xarkon turns his gaze toward the city, only the PCs stand in the way.

The reason for Xarkon's sudden interest is linked to a group of unscrupulous treasure-hunters who absconded with his ancestor's battle helm from the Hoard Memoriam in the Dragons' Boneyard. The treasure-hunters, transformed into piles of gems and gold, have since been stolen by a tribe of drow.

HOOKS

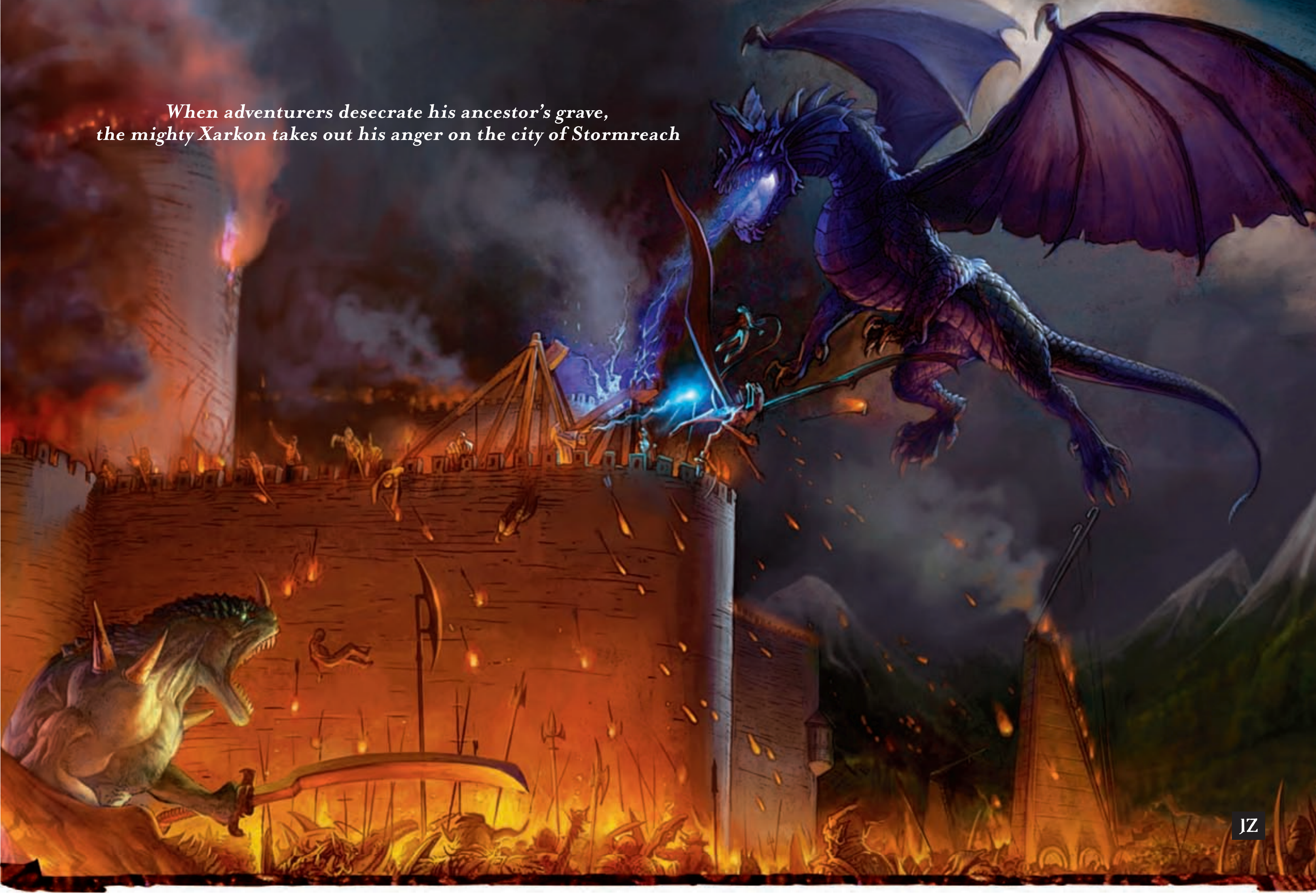
The following suggestions could begin the adventure.

In the Path of Destruction: If the PCs live in Stormreach or have business interests, friends, or colleagues there, they might wish to protect the city.

Missing Adventurers: One of the treasure-hunters was a friend or associate of the PCs and hinted at a great adventure involving the helm of a long-dead mighty blue dragon. The group did not return, and now the PCs are tracking it down.

SITES

The Dragons' Boneyard (page 140) is the ideal site for this adventure.



When adventurers desecrate his ancestor's grave, the mighty Xarkon takes out his anger on the city of Stormreach

ADVENTURE

The PCs must weather the initial assault on Stormreach and learn the motivations behind Xarkon's attack. Then they must race to find the blue dragon's ancestral war helm and return it to the Hoard Memoriam in the Boneyard to appease Xarkon and deflect his attack.

1. The Rising Storm: Scouts and tribal allies report a powerful blue dragon on the rampage, scorching a lightning trail directly toward Stormreach. The city is thrown into chaos, and the party's first task is organizing the defense. Various factions butt heads, including dragonmarked houses and local militia, and the party must exercise diplomacy to see that all sides work together. Cowards and opportunists seek to spread panic or exploit the situation—the PCs must crack down or even discreetly eliminate a few troublemakers whose self-interest exceeds their devotion to making the city safe.

Suggested Encounters: Roleplaying challenges abound as the PCs seek to unite the city. The party could come to blows with mobs of panicked citizens. Agents who seek to turn this dire situation to their advantage might even send minions to eliminate the pesky PCs in their way.

2. Siege: Xarkon's advance forces assault the city. The dragon is not foolish enough to engage its defense forces too soon, letting his minions weaken Stormreach first. The party must repel invaders and keep the city secure.

Suggested Encounters: Xarkon's advance force includes flights of manticores, an assault force of ogres, and a tunneling team of trained ankhegs. The assault is spearheaded by an elite unit of bluespawn godslayers (*MM4* 140) and a half-dragon hill giant.

3. Helm Hunt: The PCs learn from captured foes, or perhaps by parleying with the mighty Xarkon himself, that he seeks his ancestor's helm and will raze the city to the ground unless it is returned to its rightful place in the Dragons' Boneyard. The party must find the helm first; in doing so, it runs afoul of a tribe of drow who took it from the dead treasure-hunters.

Suggested Encounters: A plethora of drow foes can be found in *Secrets of Xen'drik* or *Monster Manual IV*. The drow are afflicted with the curse of the Hoard Memoriam (page 141); the PCs become cursed as well once the helm is secured.

4. Into the Boneyard: The PCs must return the helm to the Hoard Memoriam before they succumb to its curse, and before Stormreach falls to Xarkon's devastating attacks.

REWARDS

If they succeed, the PCs earn the gratitude of Stormreach and might receive hefty rewards from various city factions for their heroics. In addition, Xarkon is grateful to have his family heirloom restored to its rightful resting place and might aid the PCs in the future out of respect.

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